Reap The Whirlwind

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Reap The Whirlwind

by LivingOnTheEdge5

Summary

"Hello, Will, " she smiles, looking just as he remembered her the last time he saw her; the time she told him she had murdered her patient.
Will stops himself; that was all in the past.
"Hello Bedelia," he smiles, kissing her in turn," it's nice to see you again."
"You as well." she says, looking searchingly up into Will's face, before turning back to Hannibal.
" I understand that you and Will will be leaving soon for Florence?" She accepts the glass of cognac Will has poured for her.
"Yes," Will answers," we should be gone from here within the week, wouldn't you say?" He raises his brow at Hannibal who nods.
"Then I'm glad I'm in time to bring you this," Bedelia says, stepping away and looking towards the entryway.
"Hi dad."
William.
William is here, walking towards him.
Will falls to his knees and William runs to him.
Will pulls his son to him, clutching him tightly to his chest. He hooks his chin around Williams's neck, buries his face deep into the boy's curls, and begins to weep in harsh, rasping gasps.
William hugs the man, so like, yet not quite like, the man he remembers; the man he had found and lost...and found again.

Notes

The third and final installment of this series, based on the Thomas Harris books and the Hannibal t.v. show.
I have no beta but hopefully my grammer and puncuation are showing small signs of improvement.

I recommend reading the previous parts of the series- they are fairly short reads.

Critiques are very helpful- I don't get offended easily, and I have been known to go back and fix things ...so don't worry about giving me criticisms...

This work is dedicated to the fabulous: llfrozensunll, MacandLacy, Charlotte,cellia,acannibal,smileupward_fah,Cherry,Azvee, and all the other great Fannibals

who have read my work...Thank You!

Hannibal's paperdoll

<u>To Reap The Whirlwind</u>

For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind

Hosea 8:7

Day 26, Hannibal's home, Virginia

The day Will experienced his mind palace epiphany with Hannibal proceeded seamlessly and simply; they shared a meal which Hannibal labeled as 'brunch.'

"What are your...our plans?"

Will sips the coffee he'd just learned to brew with Hannibal's vacuum machine. Hannibal had proven to be a good teacher, both patient and thorough.

"I have hired a plane to take us directly to our destination."

Hannibal serves Will a generous portion of steak and kidney pie. He spoons gravy over the slice, pleased with how the pastry has turned-out, light and flaky.

"Which is...?"

Will trails off as he savors a bite; he harbors no allusions as to where the meat originates from. He is no longer shocked at how little this bothers him.

"Have you ever visited the Caribbean, Will?"

Hannibal is pleased to see Will sampling all the dishes; the total of which, excluding the fruit and coffee, contain a human component.

"No."

Will looks-up up coyly through his lashes, "I tend to freckle."

"Well," Hannibal laughs, "you must come from true English stock, then. An English rose which I shall endeavor to protect from the sun."

Much to his embarrassment, Will feels his face flush hotly.

"Ah! My rose is blushing."

Will sets his cup down and coffee sloshes onto the saucer.

"Sorry about that, but, please, can you...not?"

Hannibal chuckles playfully and the tension is broken.

"My apologies Will... it's just that," his expression intensifies, like a painter scanning his work before adding a brushstroke of shading, "I am deeply happy that you are here, with me, and it makes me want to...lavish you with attention. I'm sorry if that that makes you uncomfortable, but I cannot promise to stop."

Hannibal puts his cutlery down and slowly, monitoring Will's reaction, picks up the other man's hand and brings it to his lips.

"Perhaps the best solution, is for you to train yourself to accept my attentions," he says, kissing the top of Will's hand, "my touch," he adds, bringing his other hand up to briefly touch each of Will's fingertips with his own.

Hannibal is so gentle, his caresses so fleeting, that Will's nerve endings sing-out for more; Hannibal hears his sudden intake of breath.

Oh, my English Rose.

He gently returns Will's hand to the table.

Will clears his throat, "So where, exactly in the Caribbean? " He asks, shifting to ease his boner.

"I would prefer to keep our exact destination a surprise," Hannibal answers, eyes brimming with mischief.

Will looks surprised but his tone remains neutral. "You don't trust me with the location?"

"I'm trusting you with both our lives," Hannibal says, signaling the discussion is over by placing his silverware onto his empty plate. "I would imagine, that is enough for now," he says and rises to clear the table. "Please, Will, " he says, and Will looks up at him expectantly, "stay and finish your coffee. I will be in the kitchen."

It speaks much, of Will's current mindset, Hannibal thinks, that he accepts Hannibal's invitation, continuing to sip his coffee and gaze out at the view, not bothering to examine either windows or doors for possible escape routes.

The remainder of the day finds Will familiarizing himself with the guest room. He has spent days here, sedated, and strapped to the bed, but now that he is free, it has become an unchartered territory to explore.

He takes his time, examining the books, art, and well-stocked bathroom before heading over to the walk-in closet. Will turns on the lights and is stunned to discover just how much haberdashery, all of it tailored to his measurements, Hannibal has already procured. He

spends half an hour, pulling open drawers and unzipping garment bags; the sheer volume of it is astounding.

I'm Hannibal Lecter's dolly.

Will peruses crisp linen shirts, patterned ties, and packaged undergarments.

Whom he gets to play dress-up with.

Hannibal appears at the door.

"Good!" He smiles. " You have discovered your wardrobe."

Will switches places with him and Hannibal begins sorting through the clothes. He pulls out item after item, handing them to Will who lays them on the bed and chairs with growing alarm and disbelief.

"Hannibal," Will has been handed, what appears to be three identical shirts of robin's egg blue. "What compelled you to buy me three identical shirts?"

"Examine them again, Will," Hannibal says, voice muffled, deep inside the closet, "and you will find slight variations between them." He emerges with a stack of shoe boxes.

Will groans.

Ignoring Will's grumpiness, Hannibal hands him the boxes to add to the bed's growing collection.

Will sighs heavily.

"Hannibal, I don't need all this... I don't want all this!"

Will looks so adorably miserable, that Hannibal impulsively, presses up against him, boxes and all, wrapping his arms around him.

Startled, Will starts to protest but doesn't get far before his head is gripped by two, strong hands and his lips are lavished with hungry kisses.

Hannibal feels the vibrations of Will's muffled words and uses them to his advantage, pressing his tongue into Will's mouth until the soft lips open and he plunges inside.

Hannibal groans happily when he feels Will melt into his embrace. The boxes tumble down,spilling their contents as the kissing intensifies.When they finally part, Will looks so like a rumpled pet hen Hannibal remembers from his youth, that he can't help but laugh merrily.

"I am sorry beloved," he apologizes, smoothing Will's ruffled curls, " you looked so sweet, I couldn't resist."

Will grins awkwardly at Hannibal's amused playfulness.

"Well, for your punishment, you have to help me pick all this up," he says looking ruefully down at the brogues, slippers, shoe horns, and socks scattered across the floor.

"Happily," Hannibal agrees, kneeling down to begin the clean-up. He looks up at Will, and becomes instantly serious as the other man stares down, studying him.

Slowly, hesitatingly, Will brushes Hannibal's disarrayed bangs off his forehead, his fingertips trailing down the side of Hannibal's face and over his ear. It's an intimate caress, and Will freezes the moment it's over.

Pleased, Hannibal pretends not to notice, giving Will the time he needs to recover.

Soon enough, he glances up with an expression of curiosity.

"Shall we then?"

Will nods, still shy from his own affectionate gesture and joins Hannibal on the floor to sort through the muddle.

Children's section, Baltimore Public Library

Thomas feels hot all over.

One of his biggest fears, abandonment, has come true, and in the worst of all possible places. Frantically, he looks around; no William. He walks up and down the stacks; no William. Then Thomas retraces his route back to the bathroom line thinking maybe William was there.

'But then I would have seen him on the way back.

"Are you looking for someone?" asks a woman with a preschooler.

Thomas shakes his head, stifling a sob, and walks back to the table. William's backpack is still there, surrounded by papers and folders. Thomas sits down, wondering whether he should go to the front desk for help.

"Thomas?" The boy jerks his head up to see... William, walking towards him, a concerned look on his face.

Thomas' relief liquefies and runs down his face.

"Hey," says William softly, "don't cry, I'm here, I'm right here."

His words trigger something and Thomas' wet eyes spark with anger,."

"You said you would keep your eyes on me the whole time! You lied!"

"First of all," William hisses, looking around to see if anyone is listening, "keep your voice down...and, secondly, don't call me a liar!"

Thomas has never seen William like this, flinty- eyed with anger, and it scares him enough that he begins to hiccup. The younger boy's miserable expression and soft 'hic,hic,hic' is enough to jolt William out of his mood; he is flooded with sympathy.

"I'm sorry Tom-Tom," he says, using the nickname Thomas pretends to resent, but secretly craves, "I had to take a leak and went to the men's bathroom."

For the first time, since coming to the Merrill's, William wishes he didn't have the responsibility of watching Thomas. He wonders if he had been here alone whether he would already be gone.

"*You can't come with me now William."*

The woman had told him after he'd tracked her to her car. She had smiled at him, amused by his perseverance, and foolhardiness. William knew that she liked him.

"We don't want to attract attention. Next week," she had promised, and then backed-out before he had a chance to question her further.

By the time she was pulling out of the lot, William was back in the library.

"Come on, let's go check out your book. Mrs. Merrill already texted me; she's on her way."

He allows the other boy to grab his hand as they walk to the front desk. Thomas' hand is still damp from his upset, and William feels a stab of remorse.

"You did it Tom-Tom," he says, looking down at the little boy as they stand in line, "you went to the bathroom all by yourself! Make sure you tell Mrs. Merrill."

"Yeah," says Thomas quietly, and William feels his pride, "and you came back," he adds, looking shyly up at William.

"Yup." William says, feeling both anger and impatience which he tampts down. "I came back," he smiles down into the little, trusting face, "because that's what families do, they come back for one another."

I'm coming dad! One way or another, I'm coming.

Bedelia returns to her hotel and goes up to her suite. She empties a couple tiny bottles from the mini bar into a glass and spends a few minutes composing herself; then she dials Hannibal's number.

"Hello, Bedelia."

"I've made contact.

Bedelia checks the status of her manicure.

" I'll leave tomorrow for the Lake House, then return next week to pick him up."

"Excellent. What was his affect?"

"Eager... extraordinarily so. He didn't appear to be afraid of me."

"He trusts you." Hannibal says, and it isn't a question.

"Yes, though why he would, I have no idea. Either he is extremely foolhardy or extremely naive; maybe a mixture of both. He didn't know who I was, yet I'm certain he would have left with me."

"Hmm" Hannibal is amused."It is lucky for William then, that you are who you say you are, or he might have been in for a nasty surprise. I thought all American children were taught to fear strangers?" He adds facetiously.

"I'm still not certain what you're asking me to do with him." Hannibal has been circumspect about the details of this operation.

"Let me know when you have arrived at the house tomorrow."

Hannibal doesn't bother to answer her question. *Typical.*

"Allow plenty of time to familiarize yourself with its accoutrements. We are neither of us certain how long you may be there, though the sooner you complete your assessment, the better."

"Alright." Bedelia agrees and wonders with distaste, if Hannibal's plans include killing William should he prove to be 'unsuitable.'

"Goodbye, then, or should I say good morning?" Bedelia wonders if her hotel's masseuse service comes to the rooms.

"Have a pleasant evening Bedelia."

"Thank you, I will." Bedelia is constantly amazed at Hannibal's arrogance. *God complex and narcissism appear to be intensifying with age.*

"Give Will my best."

"Yes, thank you, I will do that. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

Bedelia sits quietly, reviewing her options, the same ones she has considered since being requisitioned by Hannibal to assess Will Graham's son.

"I wonder*," s*he says aloud and smiles.

Power Outage

Chapter Summary

Hannibal's home experiences a power outage-mind games ensue.

Chapter Notes

This chapter has mocked me for weeks- I've reworked it- rewritten it- left it alone...finally I kicked its snarky little butt out of my draft folder yelling: "Just go... get out of here!!"

I have never read/seen "Hannibal Rising" so the end of this chapter might be slightly "off canon."

Thanks again for reading :-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Day **26-40 Hannibal's house in Virginia**

Hannibal has, since their first frenetic coupling, allowed Will to decide when they will next have sex, and also, whether or not they share a bed at night.

And thus far, the sex has yet to be repeated, and Will has chosen to sleep alone in his own room. Though inwardly surprised, outwardly, Hannibal accepts Will's with ease and grace. He assures Will that he is satisfied with his decisions, only adding the proviso that, "should you wish for more intimacy, I would be happy to oblige."

Two days after his declaration, Hannibal is already rethinking his stance.

As he tracks Will's location through the house via his tablet, Hannibal muses over the possible reasons behind Will's reticence. He doesn't believe it is motivated by fear, or lack of libido. Rather, it appears to him that Will is misguidedly attempting to maintain a sense of self by denying himself access to Hannibal's body and bed. No sex is fine with Hannibal, for a time, anyway. His sexual needs are temperate, but he knows Will does not share this same propensity. Though Will's solitary lifestyle certainly leant itself to chastity, his sessions with Hannibal under deep hypnosis revealed a surprisingly lusty mindscape.

And suppressing those needs is not beneficial to either himself or his partner.

My, Will, Hannibal muses, as he watches him pick out a book and flop onto an armchair, *we haven't come this far just to regress back into a plutonic relationship.*

Mindful of Will's prejudice against traditional psychoanalysis, the cognitive therapy Hannibal practices with Will is unobtrusive yet persistent.

Each day Hannibal awakens Will with a lingering kiss, remaining in the room to select Will's outfit, while the other man showers. Then, wrapped in nothing but a towel, Will sits in the steamy bathroom and allows Hannibal to shave and groom him.

"Manscaping" is what Will facetiously calls their ritual, and he grimaces his way through the facials, hair products, and moisturizers Hannibal seems to have an unlimited supply of.

Next, Hannibal plays valet for Will, while he dresses. During this time, Hannibal educates Will about such topics as; American verses European fashion, how to create five basic tie knots, and what "cocktail formal", "white-tie", and morning dress actually means. Will doubts he will ever be able to keep any of it straight, and frankly doesn't care if he can't.

Then, a regime of chaste touches, pats and touches is continued throughout the day; the frequency of which has been incrementally increased.

The results of Hannibal's efforts are encouraging. Now it is Will, who more often than not, seeks out Hannibal's company and his eye contact, is also much improved.

All in all, other than the sticky wicket of sex, Hannibal is pleased with Will's progress and consults him about everything from meal preparation to trip planning. Will is curious to explore the Parisian catacombs and the canals of Venice. Hannibal shares how he would like to revisit the lavender fields of Provence. Will grumbles that the lack of internet access makes trip planning unnecessarily difficult, but Hannibal knows better than to subject Will to that sort of temptation. However, Hannibal has discovered that donning a puckish grin while handing Will yet another guidebook is the surest way to defuse any tensions; Will always laughs and sometimes even kisses Hannibal for his troubles.

With a handful of days remaining, Hannibal has also been busy tying up the loose ends of his American interests; this includes William Wyse.

He knows William current arrangement with the Crawford's cannot last. By all accounts, Bella's demise is eminent, and after she is gone, Hannibal doubts Jack will continue with his guardianship.

Though Hannibal is not interested in children per se, he admits he has a scientific curiosity with regards to Will's son. He wonders what sort of psychosis could take root in the developing brain of a child with an empathy disorder. He theorizes that systematic conditioning, in conjunction with rage inducing Benzodiazepines or steroids, could produce some very interesting results indeed.

Perhaps Bedelia might be prevailed upon to assist me with something along these lines. It is certainly an avenue worth exploring.

That night, a vicious storm blows across the area, knocking-down trees and power lines in a three countywide swath of destruction. Hannibal's first thought, when he is woken by the thrumming of the wind to a pitch black room, is how long his security system has been forced to run on batteries. After eight hours, it will need power from the main supply; for this contingency, there is a generator in the garage.

Hannibal checks his iPad, Will is still asleep. Then, an idea occurs to him.

At that same moment, Will is bolted awake by the sound of a freight train barreling past his window.

He lies in the dark, confused, because no trains run near Wolf Trap.

Then, he remembers where he is. *I am with Hannibal now, and we are leaving in two days.*

Will listens to the wind and the drumming of raindrops and a wave of homesickness washes over him.

Storms at Wolf Trap always spelled domestic comfort; pots of coffee brewed on his camping stove, books read by lantern light, and a warm pack of dogs settled by the fireside, nudging him periodically for reassuring scratches. At Wolf Trap, he had been the only one in charge; both protector and provider. That role had only increased when William came...

Will stops this train of thought before it becomes too painful.

William is gone... and if I go back now, I will end up in a supermax, or under Chilton's thumb for the rest of my life.

He peers into the pitchy blackness, realizing that his clock is dark.

The power is down.

He looks in the direction of the security camera; the profiler in him activated. He assumes it has a battery back-up with six to ten hours of charge. He listens for the hum of a generator; nothing.

That's odd.

Will forces himself to lie still, but his heart is pounding with the ramifications.

Is Hannibal allowing his security system to run out of battery life? He must have a generator stashed away. Why isn't it running? Is Hannibal aware the power is off, or is this just another way to test my loyalty?

He falls back into a fitful doze, roused when he hears the familiar sound of his door opening.

"Hannibal?" he calls out, and immediately, the door swings inward, and Hannibal appears, holding a battery operated lantern.

"Yes, Will?"

"Did the storm knock out the power?" Will asks, sitting upright.

"It did."

Hannibal comes all the way in and scanning the other man's face in the lantern's light.

"Would you like to assist me later with the generator?"

"Do you think we need it?"

Will looks at the weak light streaming through the windows.

"What time is it?"

"A little after eight."

Will can't feel the other man's emotions; Hannibal has erected a mental wall between them.

The hairs on Will's arms stands up.

"How much diesel do you have?"

"Enough for roughly ten generator hours," smelling a weak spike of fear from the other man.

"Maybe we should leave it for now. " *Is he even worried about the security system?* "Unless you're worried about spoilage."

"No, I have plenty of ice. But it will mean cold showers." *Will is testing me.*

" That doesn't bother me if it doesn't bother you" Will smiles. "I think we can tough it out for a day or two. We'll be leaving soon anyway. We have wood for the stoves and the fireplace, that should be enough to warm the main rooms, wouldn't you say?" He's still having a hard time interpreting Hannibal's reactions.

Hannibal nods.

"And with candles and a couple more lanterns..." Will glances up at the double paned windows, grinning ruefully," this place is better insulated than my place in Wolf Trap ever was."

"Just as you say."

So...this place will have no alarms.

Will pushes back the bedclothes and gets up. Hannibal hands him the lantern.

"Place it in the doorway of the bathroom. That should provide enough light for us both," he advises then begins to turn for the closet when Will grabs his hand and pulls him back towards him.

The predator in Hannibal bristles at the unexpected contact, but relaxes as soon as he realizes he is being pulled into a kiss. He quickly winds his arms around Will and pulls the smaller man towards him, dominating the kiss and making it rougher than Will had intended.

Abruptly, Hannibal pulls away and gives Will a questioning look.

"Good morning," Will says, breathless, and half hard from the rough kiss. *Hannibal suspects.*

"Good morning."

Though Will's initiation of their morning kiss was the result of a guilty conscience Hannibal is pleased, nonetheless.

Will hurries into the bathroom after depositing the lantern onto the floor of the open doorway, his pajama bottoms tented in the front.

Hannibal's smile in the semidarkness is warm and genuine.

My Puritanical William.

He walks into the closet and locating warm garments by touch alone. *So repressed, so timid.* He smiles when Will's hiss of distress indicates the hot water has run-out.

Hannibal lays the clothes onto the unmade bed.

How much longer dear heart before I will be fucking you raw and you will still be begging me for more?

He gives a cashmere sweater a contemplative caress, then debates whether to shave Will this morning.

Better to keep him guessing, he decides, and returns instead to his own room to prepare for the day.

By the time Will is done with his shower, he is shaking from the cold, and wondering why he decided against restoring the power.

Why should I care? He thinks, as he towels himself off, "*I'm not going anywhere. My life is with Hannibal now."*

He had been surprised not to find Hannibal, shaving tackle in hand, when he'd stepped out of the shower.

Will pokes his head out of the bathroom door; no Hannibal, though he sees that his clothes have been set-out, as usual.

Huh? What's *that about? Well, fuck... it's too cold to shave anyway.*

Will hums as he spreads on deodorant and towels his hair. *Now this is more like it!* He thinks approvingly about his simple toilette, though he misses the intimacy of Hannibal's touch during his daily, ministrations.

Dressed warmly, and feeling cheerful, Will goes downstairs to start the fires. Soon, both the stove in the living room, and the fireplace in the dinning room are blazing, and Hannibal finds him toasting himself before the stove.

"Thank you Will," Hannibal noted that Will's 'woodsman' look is back." Now, how does a breakfast casserole sound? Just hand me the matches and I'll light the range."

After breakfast, Will wanders into the living room and Hannibal retreats to his office. Still tired from his interrupted sleep, Will settles on a chair by the fire, and dozes off. He is roused an hour later by the rattle of sleet against the windows.

Yawning and stretching, Will grabs a copy of "Popular Mechanics" and moves to the couch which commands the best view of the lake. Soon, he leans forward dreamily, engrossed with the view, aa his magazine drops, unheeded to the floor.

This is how Hannibal, padding down the dark hallway in stockinged feet finds him; contemplatively watching sheets of icy rain whip up the lake's surface.

Hannibal stands, concealed by the dark hallway, drinking up the sight and committing it to memory.

Silhouetted and bathed in the amber light of flickering flames, Will looks like a young saint contemplating his martyrdom. His hair, long enough to curl and wave around his ears, is burnished by the golden light. Hannibal traces the lines of the finely molded brow, nose and sensuous mouth, down to the white column of his neck. He sees how the breadth of Will's chest ends in a tapered waist and can just glimpse the curving globes of Will's firm, yet plush ass.

Motionless as a statue, Hannibal's possessive desire is stirring his cock.

"Aren't you going to sit with me?" Will asks without turning his head.

How Will was alerted to his presence is unknown, a mystery Hannibal has never cared to solve. Because at that moment, when Will sensed his presence and called for him, something cold and jagged in Hannibal melted into a pool of warmth that spread through his body.

Wordlessly, he walks over to Will, and sinking to his knees, wraps his arms around Will's waist, burying his face in Will's lap; like a child seeking comfort.

Will grunts a little from surprise and the sudden weight, but, then slowly, soothingly, begins to stroke Hannibal's hair.

"Shh,shh,shh," he croons, lowering his head to kiss Hannibal's face and encircle him in an embrace, "it's alright, I'm here," he says.

Contently Hannibal, breathes in Will's scent, before, head still on Will's lap, he swings his body up and onto the couch.

Then, Hannibal turns his face towards the window so he can see what Will sees; the rain lashed lake, the boughs of trees dancing in the wind, and the flickering of firelight over the walls.

And for the first time, in more years than Will Graham has even graced this good earth, Hannibal Lector, sadist and cannibal, falls asleep, trustingly, and sweetly, under the tender gaze of someone who loves him, just as he is.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter...finally...away.... they....go!!!

See previous chapter for update

Chapter Summary

Click " previous chapter" button for actual chapter :-)

AO3 posted an update of a deleted chapter :-). Please scroll back to see the " real chapter 2"

To The New World

Chapter Summary

During their flight from America, Hannial feeds Will "homemade goodies" and fantasizes about having sex covered in blood.

Chapter Notes

I've added tags as the story is swinging into more explicit material-natch!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

December 28, Cat Island, Out Islands, the Bahamas

Their escape from America proved much easier than Hannibal had anticipated.

The morning of their departure, Will experienced such a severe panic attack, that Hannibal was forced to sedate him. Rolling his lover to the private jet in a wheelchair, he debriefed the concerned, but accommodating steward about their needs for the upcoming trip.

As soon as the captain reached cruising altitude, Hannibal and the steward shifted Will to the bed where Hannibal gave him a top-up injection.

Hannibal sits in a chair next to the bed and researches Florence and Tuscany. He is taken with the idea of following the "Piero della Francesca Trail" and examines the masterpieces strung along its 118 km route. When Hannibal comes to the photo of the "Flaggellation of Christ," his eyes spark with connection. All those long months ago, sitting on the veranda of his Tuscan villa, he had flipped through an exhibition catalogue and seen this same work. It was the same day Will's photo had appeared on Tattlecrime; the photo's companion article detailing his release from hospital. Hannibal remembers sitting in the Tuscan twilight and retrieving William Wyse's information from his memory palace, setting into motion the events which led to where he is today.

And now? Hannibal's eyes roam over Will's sleeping form:

God 's in His heaven—
All 's right with the world!

When Will begins to stir, Hannibal alerts the steward that they are ready for their meal.

"Good afternoon," Hannibal says, in Italian. "Here, let me help you."

He piles pillows to create a backrest as Will struggles to an upright position.

"I need to take leak," Will replies in dialect, and Hannibal laughs.

"Of course."

The steward shows Will where the facilities are. While he's gone, Hannibal removes his own jacket and shoes while a second steward brings their meal from the galley.

When Will returns, face still damp with cold water, he finds Hannibal standing next to the bed which has a bed table, set for a meal, swung across the bottom of it.

"I can sit at a table," Will protests as Hannibal herds him back onto the bed.

"Sit here."

Too fuzzy to argue, Will allows himself to be seated back onto the bed and settled against the pillows. Then, Hannibal sits down beside him and the steward rolls the table up the bed until it is directly over Hannibal's lap.

Will watches the steward pour two glasses of water, and one glass of wine and arrange sliced bread into a basket. Hannibal thanks and dismisses the steward who discreetly disappears around the partition. Next, Hannibal unpacks a large pasteboard box crammed with crudités and homemade charcuterie.

Once all the items are unpacked and arranged to his satisfaction, Hannibal snakes his arm behind Will's back, and pulls Will to him, arranging him so that his head is resting on Hannibal's chest.

Will's arms are now trapped at his sides. He peers up, through his eyelashes, and gives Hannibal a questioning look.

"You're wet," Hannibal says, wiping drops of water off Will's forehead with a thumb and kissing Will's eyebrow.

"Not to mention I can't move my arms. "

Will tugs a little as though to prove his point. " And my head feels like it might float off, what did you give me back there?" He allows himself to relax into Hannibal's embrace.

"Propofol."

Hannibal peels a section of mandarin and lifts it to Will's mouth, "Open up."

Will automatically opens his mouth, though he doesn't like the submissiveness of being fed.

"Isn't that the stuff Missouri was stopped from using for lethal injections?"

"Please don't speak with your mouth full," Hannibal chides as he selects a slice of dried sausage. " But to answer your question, yes, but only because the European Union threatened sanctions, not because of safety or efficacy concerns."

Hannibal pushes the slice between Will's lips.

"I can feed myself," Will grumbles biting into its salty richness.

"Of course you can."

Hannibal savors the sensation of Will's sleep-warmed, heavy head resting against him, and the way his long eyelashes sweep down when he peers at the tidbits presented to him.

"But this gives us both pleasure I believe."

Hannibal places another piece of meat against Will's lips and feels their softness close around his finger tips.

"And I very much enjoy watching you eat."

It takes nearly an hour until the last floury slice of peasant loaf and vinegary cornichon is consumed, and by then, Will has become sleepy again.

He falls back into a light and troubled doze while still slumped across Hannibal's chest. Hannibal pushes the table down the length of the bed, and readjusts the pillows. He lies down, pulling Will up onto his chest and tucking Will's head under his chin. In this position, Will's ear is resting over Hannibal's heart and soon, the steady rhythms of his heartbeat and breathing serves its purpose; Will transitions into a calmer sleep pattern. Lulled by the good meal, the heat of his lover's body, and his peaceful breathing, Hannibal sleeps as well.

Upon their arrival, Will is woozily alert enough to walk, but Hannibal still insists he utilize the wheelchair awaiting them on the tarmac.

"I'm not an invalid," Will notes, blanking for a moment on what their new names are, "I can walk...Etorre."

Hannibal's only response is to kiss the top of "Gabriele's" head while disengaging the brake and pushing him towards an estate car parked at the end of the landing strip.

Their driver and general dogsbody greets them in Italian as he opens their door and loads up the luggage.

The estate's owner explained in his correspondence with Hannibal that, "My man, Claus, comes with the house." But it wasn't until Hannibal had completed his own inquiries that he

had agreed to keep him on as a retainer.

Claus it was revealed, is a German ex-pat who fled his country ten years ago to avoid jail time after a disastrous audit. Hannibal was also pleased to unearth Claus' boozing and roostering proclivities which had not endeared him to the locals; his loss would not be mourned, especially if it was the result of accidental drowning due to intoxication.

"Thank you Claus. We are very pleased to make your acquaintance."

They drive from the private landing strip across terrain which is both lush and mountainous.

"Who is the owner?" Will asks Hannibal quietly; his impressions of Claus are not favorable ones.

"A descendant of the original owner," Hannibal threads Will's fingers through his own," who now spends his considerable wealth wintering and traveling abroad. I understand he will be alternating between the French Rivera and the Swiss Alps for the next year. He was happy to let his home for a reduced fee."

"I never pegged you as a bargain hunter," Will teases, lifting Hannibal's hand and kissing the back of it.

"Wealth is not his that has it..." Hannibal leans into Will, nuzzling his ear with his mouth, "but his that enjoys it.'" He presses gentle kisses against Will's neck in a manner he knows does wonderful things to his lover. He can already smell Will's arousal above the scents of leather and the humid, tropical air.

"Who said that... Caligula?"

Will's face and neck are flush from Hannibal's roaming mouth and tongue. Though Hannibal's face is still buried in the crook of his neck, Will can feel him grimace at the tasteless joke.

"Benjamin Franklin, actually." Hannibal growls softly, giving Will a disciplinary nip on his ear and a teasing squeeze to Will's growing erection.

Will's huff is half moan, half startled protest. He squirms in an attempt to reposition himself, but pressed as he is into the seat by Hannibal's body, he can't move away. So instead, he turns his head and catches Hannibal's mouth in a retaliatory kiss which is more teeth and tongue than lips.

As his passengers continue to kiss and grope one another, Claus phelegmatically raises the partition.

Twenty minutes later, the driver coughs discretely when they arrive at their destination. He parks the car, and helps the men with their luggage. Sated with large amounts of black market U.S. dollars, he makes his goodbyes and cycles home on a bike he retrieves from a shed.

Now the two men are well and truly alone.

Seeing that Will is still a little shaky, Hannibal wraps his arm around Will's waist to steady him, and they climb the sweeping front stairs in tandem.

Hannibal watches with satisfaction as Will's gaze takes in the stately home, fronted by Grecian columns, and the surrounding gardens and glimmering sea beyond.

"It's beautiful,"Will says softly, as he looks outwards to the sparkling ocean.

Hannibal doesn't fail to notice that in the afternoon light, his lover's eyes rival the color and sparkle of the cerulean water.

"It is," Hannibal agrees, then releases Will as he swings-open the front door.

"Welcome home, William," he says, stepping aside to allow Will to enter the large and airy foyer.

Will walks through the foyer, past salons and dining rooms of a bygone era, finally entering a modern kitchen. It's most striking feature is its floor to ceiling French doors which lead out onto an immense veranda.

"Do we have beach access from here?"

"We do."

Hannibal comes up to stand next to Will as he unlatches and opens the double doors. Hannibal sniffs appreciatively at the warm scent of green, growing things, salt water, and flowers, "and other than a small population of locals, this island is our own."

Will smiles and closes his tired eyes, as the soft wind kisses his face. The breeze lifts his hair, and wafts his scent to Hannibal: sweat, precum, Hannibal's own cologne, airplane disinfectant, and the musky, cinnamon smell of the man himself.

"Come," says Hannibal softly, with his hand on the small of Will's back, "let us go out to the verandah; you can rest your head while I assess the kitchen."

Will nods absently and they walk out through to the furnished seating area, shaded by a blooming trumpet vine entwined pergola. Hannibal settles Will on a chaise lounge and leaves him still gazing seaward.

By the time Hannibal returns with chilled water, champagne, fruit and hot broth, Will is fast asleep, jet lagged and still under the influence of his sedation.

Hannibal fixes himself a little snack as he admires the vista; he plans to wait for Will before serving the wine.

He checks his phone and finds he has one new message:

PC confirmed deceased.

W moved to foster home.

B

Hannibal considers this new information. Bedelia is one of the most intelligent people he has had the privilege to know. Yet, privy as she is to Hannibal's private dealings, her odds of survival are rapidly decreasing.

Surely, Bedelia is intelligent enough to know that ultimately, inevitably, her time is running-out.

Hannibal smiles; warmed by the memory of her beauty and cleverness. He wonders what sorts of survival plans his resourceful girl is busy plotting even now.

Hannibal looks down at Will, and his smile widens. In repose, Will looks younger; slumber soothing the cares from his face and body.

Hannibal wants to lay the world at Will's feet. He wants to watch as his exquisite lover murders for pleasure for the very first time; then again, and again and again.

He knows that Will, other than the times he was purposely in the mindset of killers, only killed, or been driven to kill, while under extreme duress. Will has never,truly, experienced the joy surrounding the planning and anticipation of the hunt. He has never sliced through a warm carcass, harvesting the choicest cuts with a meal plan already in mind.

Hannibal also has certain plans in mind for the moment Will is ready for sex again.

Their home here boasts a beautiful paneled gallery, resplendent with cool marble floors and a Rococo painted ceiling. Hannibal imagines slowly stripping his lover, and laying his supine body on the cold stone over which hot, fresh blood has been poured. First, he would fuck Will's mouth and throat, watching as his lover moans and squirms across the slick surface. Then, he would lube his own hard cock, with more blood, and ram it into Will's waiting entrance; pounding into him, over and over, until they both white out and collapse in a tangle of limbs, bathed in crimson.

Hannibal returns from his pleasant fantasies to thoughts of food- sex always makes him hungry. He opens his tablet and reviews bookmarked websites about the wide and varied cuisines of the Caribbean. He wonders, which dishes would do justice to Bedelia's elegance and wiliness, her irrefutable, and undeniable, "good taste."

Eyes on Will, Hannibal sips his broth, and hopes he will awaken soon; he is ready to put, at least a portion, of his plans into action.

Chapter End Notes

Chap title borrowed from "Hannibal"
Unreferenced quote is Robert Browning
box of "goodies" is borrowed from "Hannibal" the movie (though I DOUBT any kid would willingly eat brain! Even little kids know what brains look like!!!)

Stupid Boy

Chapter Summary

William is a chip off the old block and seeing things that aren't there. Bedelia keeps her promise to Hannibal and kidnaps Will Graham's son.

Please note- tags added for description of mental illness/institutions.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Boy, stupid boy
Don't sit at the table until you're able to
Toy, broken toy
Shout and shout,
You're inside out if you don't know Electric Co.
-U2

Out of all the kids the Merrill's have fostered over the past ten years, William is dichotomically one of the easiest to care for but the hardest to reach emotionally.

Outwardly he presents a calm facade; performing well in school, shouldering his share of chores, and attending his weekly therapy sessions.

By all measurable indices, he is a success story, yet the Merrill's notice he prefers to be alone and never confides in them, or anyone else for that matter.

Then there are the stories the little boys tell, all about William engaging in elaborate conversations while alone in his room.

"It's super creepy," Kurt says with relish to Mrs. Merrill, who chides him for spying on his foster brother," he does all these weird voices and everything!"

But when Mrs. Merrill accidentally witnesses the behavior herself, she asks William about it.

The boy doesn't deny he converses with himself when he's alone. He explains that it's just part of a " visualization exercise" he'd learned from his former therapist, so Mrs. Merrill had dropped the topic.

Humiliated by his discovery, William attempted to supress his "visualization exercises", and for several weeks, his foster parents are pleased with how happy and engaged with the family he appears to be.

Then Bella Crawford died five days before Christmas.

Still in a numbed state, Jack had sat in Bella's empty room and called the Merrills to inform them of his loss. After he hung up the phone, he sat, staring at nothing until the sun went down and the room turned dark and cold.

Mr. Merrill had waited until after the little boys had been put to bed that night before relaying Jack's message on to William.

The man had stopped, just outside the open door of William's room where the boy lay, sprawled on his bed, reading.

"Mrs. Crawford's dead," William says, as soon as Mr. Merrill appears by his open door.

"Yes, how did you..." Mr. Merrill stops himself; he and his wife have long suspected that William spies on them, though they've never caught him in the act.

When they had brought up the problem of William's suspected spying to his therapist, they were told that this behavior was a common coping mechanism in children who've experienced tragedies and emotional upheavals.

"*Once William feels secure in his environment, this behavior should lessen then cease all together,"* he had assured them.

"OK," William says, looking down at his book, "Is there going to be a funeral?"

A note of concern has crept into his voice.

"No, but Mr. Crawford said he would like to see you sometime next month."

William frowns. "What did you tell him?"

"I said, I thought you would like that."

"OK," William says, while appearing to think it over, "OK," he repeats and returns to his book.

"Anything else?" he adds when Mr. Merrill doesn't move.

"You know, it's alright to be sad about this, William," Mr. Merrill says lightly. "It's alright for boys and men to cry when they're sad."

"Do you want to see me cry, Mr. Merrill?"

William speaks slowly, as though he's mulling the concept over.

Offended, Mr. Merrill forces out a weak chuckle, "No. I'm just letting you know that it's alright if you feel like crying. You know you don't have to be alone in this. We're always here if you'd like to talk."

"OK. Thanks Mr. Merrill," William replies casually, "Good night, and could you close the door please?"

"Sure," Mr. Merrill says closing the door and going to find his wife.

Early the next morning, terrified screams shatter the quiet of the Merrill household, ripping the occupants out of sleep.

Hearts pounding from adrenaline, Mr. and Mrs. Merrill sit bolt upright when their bedroom door slams open and two, scared little boys race in.

"Someone is killing William!" Thomas yells.

Clinging to his brother, little Kurt is weeping with fear.

The adults jump out of bed and grab a child apiece.

Other than the sounds from the frightened children now in their arms, the house is eerily quiet.

"He's dead!!!" concludes Thomas, and Kurt buries his damp face into Mr. Merrill's chest screaming, "I don't want to see him all dead!"

The Merrill's share a grimace, and attempt to bring order to chaos.

"I'll stay with the boys." Mr. Merrill places Thomas into his wife's arms "You go check on him."

Mrs. Merrill leaves her husband explaining to the boys why some people have nightmares and what "night terrors" are.

Her converted sewing room, just at the end of the hallway, is a quick trip; she knocks quietly on the closed door then opens it.

The light from the hallway spills into the small, dark room, illuminating the bed. Even in the half light, Mrs. Merrill can see that it's empty. For one heart stopping moment, she thinks maybe, just maybe, something horrible has happened. Then, from the darkest corner of the room, she hears a small, steady voice. William.

"Yes?"

Mrs. Merrill flips on the light.

Huddled in a ball in the corner, obscured by the desk and laundry basket, is William. All Mrs. Merrill can see of him is a dark head of hair and two bright, unblinking blue eyes studying her.

"William?"

All at once her nose is assaulted by the sharp scent of fresh urine.

A hardened veteran of nighttime accidents, Mrs. Merrill automatically scans the rumpled bed for telltale signs of dampness.

It's totally dry.

The reason William is not moving from his current location is now clear.

"Just put you're PJs into the basket and I'll wash them in the morning," she says in a light, practical manner.

"OK," comes the measured response.

From down the hallway, Mr. Merrill is calling," Everything alright? Kurt and Thomas want to see if William's OK."

"Everything's fine, just give us a minute!"

Mrs. Merrill turns back to William.

"Do you want to take a shower?"

"No, but can I have some privacy?"

"Of course. Sure you don't need anything?" She asks, hand on the doorknob.

"I'll come out when I'm done," William says, refusing to move until the woman has closed the door.

"OK. "

The woman closes the door.

As soon as the latch clicks shut, William stands up and starts to remove his urine soaked nightclothes feeling angry and humiliated.

Fuck!

He peels off his wet underwear and pajama bottoms. Staying *here is turning me into a fucking baby who wets himself!*

William grabs fresh underwear and sweats from the stacking baskets and frowns when he sees his shirt is wet as well

"Shit!!!"

Outside in the hallway, William hears the high, jumbled voices of the little boys and feels their anxious excitement. He buries the wet clothing under the rest of his dirty laundry and grabs the basket to take out.

While they wait the little boys have been busy reminiscing about their own, exciting, experiences:

"Tom Tom talks at night."

Kurt hold out his arms to Mrs. Merrill when she emerges from William's room. "And one time, he walked to the closet and peed inside," he giggles nestling into the woman's embrace.

His older brother scowls. " I was littler than you are when I did that!"

Then the door opens, and William appears, fully dressed and holding a filled laundry basket.

"Hi, guys," he says, placing the basket onto the floor of the hallway and shoving it away with his foot."What are you doing up?"

"You were screaming!!!" Little Kurt is excited to be awake and included. "You scared me! Can I get a piggyback ride now?" He adds abruptly, leaning out of Mrs. Merrill's arms and towards the older boy.

William sighs, but is happy for the distraction; the sooner everyone gets back to bed the better. He turns around for the boy to climb onto his back.

"You don't have to," Mrs. Merrill tells him, keeping her grip onto Kurt who is now struggling to get away from her.

"It's fine," says William over his shoulder. "Come on Kurt!"

"Not right now, " says, Mr. Merrill scooping the squirming boy out of his wife's arms and slinging him over his own broad shoulder. "Let William get back to bed. And don't forget, we're going to go see Santa tomorrow," he adds to the child, " you don't want to be too sleepy to tell him what a good boy you've been; my little sack of potatoes!"

Giggling, Kurt allows himself to be transported back to bed, calling, "Bye, William!" as he kicks his bare feet in the air.

His big brother turns serious eyes back to William.

"Come on Thomas," Mrs. Merrill says, putting her arms around his shoulders, "you too."

Thomas twists out of her grasp, "I just need to tell William something first!"

William sighs again when Thomas pulls on his sleeve, beckoning him to come closer. William leans down and feels the hot breath of the boy's mouth against his ear. Then, in a buzzing whisper;

" It's OK, I wet the bed too sometimes."

He pulls back, smiling shyly up at the older boy.

William smiles tightly, and swallows down a lump.

"Thanks buddy," he says gruffly, softly punching Thomas in the stomach. "Goodnight."

Happy and grinning now, Thomas takes Mrs. Merrill's hand.

"Goodnight, William!"

"After I get him settled would you like me to come sit with...?" Mrs. Merrill begins before William cuts her off.

"No, I'm fine. Sorry I woke you guys...I'm pretty tired so I'm going to go back to bed."

"Oh, OK," Mrs. Merrill says, to the clearly hurting boy.

William goes back into his room and clicks on his desk lamp. Now, every corner is illuminated.

He is heading back to his bed, when the feeling of another presence in the room makes the back of his neck prickle.

Mouth open, heart pounding, he turns.

Standing in the bright room, is the figure from his nightmare; his mother's murderer, ghostly white, but with pure black, sunken eyes which stare at him with evil intensity.

"Nooo!" William whimpers backing up and falling onto his bed. "You're not real," he says, through clenched teeth, closing his eyes and curling himself into a defensive ball.

He lies, panting and cringing, anticipating the moment icy cold fingers find his neck.

Several minutes pass before he feels brave enough to peer out.

The vision is gone, replaced instead, with the figure of Hannibal Lecter, studying the boy with scornful amusement. "Hello William.What was so frightening just now that it caused you to piss yourself?"

William's body unfurls even as his hands curl into tight fists.

"I should have killed you when I had the chance," William snarls.

Hannibal pulls out the small desk chair and settles onto it, sighing with contentment as he stretches out his long legs.

"Uh,uh, uhh! That is not a polite way to speak to me, William," he says in the accented, supercilious voice the boy remembers so well, "But then, I suspect fear makes you rude as well as violent."

Hannibal's face grows sharper:

"Have you forgotten so soon, everything I wrote about in my letters? I put a great deal of time and effort into their creation only to have you disregard their lessons so quickly."

William stares. Part of him knows what he is seeing isn't really there. But the other, stronger part of him, the part from which his empathy flows, is desperate for connection, even if it means imagining a conversation with a killer.

"I'm afraid you are a very stupid, silly, little boy," Hannibal concludes, sadly. "Not so very much like your father after all. I will be going now."

William is alone again.

He looks at his clock: 3:13.

Shivering, he gets back into bed and takes stock of his situation; the hallucinations are getting worse.

The Merrill's are nice enough, he thinks, but he doubts he will be allowed to stay if, like tonight, he loses control over his visions and become too disruptive.

"Disruptive" was a term he'd heard a lot back at the group home.

The older and wiser boys all told him it was adult code for, "bat shit crazy" convincing him that every kid labeled with that dreaded moniker was "transferred to another facility," more code for being locked-up in a psych ward.

Although William knew the other boys were teasing him, the threat of further hospitalizations always made him rigid with fear.

Even, now, months later, he continues to have episodes from which he wakes up, soaked in sweat, imagining he's back in the psychiatric ward of the hospital.

He will live on the streets before he goes back there.

Shit, dad! How could you let this happen? Ex-cop? FBI profiler? This is bullshit!

There's a tiny rap on his door; it's Mr. Merrill, again.

"Hey." The man steps into the room. "Just making sure you're OK. It's alright if you need to take a shower."

Motherfucker! *Can't I get one second to myself around here?*

"No, I'm fine. I was just about to turn off the light."

But William's deflections don't work this time, and to his dismay, Mr. Merrill sits down on the chair Hannibal has just vacated.

"How did you and your mom celebrate Christmas?" He asks, out of the blue.

What the f...?!! What is he trying to do? "Ummm, I don't know."

William looks away, blinking hard.

"Are there any traditions you did together that you'd like to do with us?"

In spite of himself, William's mind flashes to a hundred images and memories: assembling cookie plates for the neighbors, cutting down a tree, walking through their neighborhood at nighttime to view decorations, dragging both their stockings to his mom's room and snuggling with her as they unwrapped the little presents...

I am NOT doing this!

William's chest heaves; he can barely make out the pattern of the bedspread through his tears. To his relief, Mr. Merrill doesn't say or do anything, until he regains his composure.

"Do you know why we foster kids, William?"

William shakes his head, glad for the change in topic.

"We do it because we like kids and enjoy helping them. And because sometimes moms and dads like Kurt and Thomas' need time to learn the tools to become better parents."

William stares down at his hands saying nothing; he knows Kurt and Thomas will never be returned to his parents-not after the things he's experienced second hand.

"We're happy you're with us, William. You're an important part of this family."

"Thanks." William looks up." I'm going to go to bed now."

"Okay...You want anything? A snack?"

"No, I'm good, goodnight." William feels frantic; he really needs to be alone now.

Mr. Merrill stands up and walks over to William who tenses, preparing for the hug he knows the man wants to give him. Instead, Mr. Merrill looks down at him sadly.

"Goodnight then," and waits until William pulls the bedclothes up. "Do you want to keep the desk light on?"

William, who is now a just a mop of brown curls and eyes peering out from the top of his quilt shakes his head.

"No, that's fine," he says, voice muffled. Mr. Merrill turns off the lamp and walks over to the door.

"Maybe we can set something up with you and Mr. Crawford after Christmas."

"Maybe."

Mr. Merrill waits a moment, hand on the light switch.

" OK, goodnight then, William... I love you."

William stiffens.

Bella was the last person to tell William she loved him. Even Will, whose love for William had been heartfelt, had never said, those, exact, three words.

William hadn't realized until this moment, how much he had needed to hear those words.

Mr. Merrill turns off the overhead light and closes the door.

For a few moments, William clutches the quilt in the dark, teetering on the brink of either screaming or burying his face into his pillow and crying hysterically.

Shaking, he berates himself.

"Stupid, silly, little boy!"

Angrily he grabs his phone, opens Tattlecrime , and reads every article referencing Hannibal Lecter and his dad he can find.

William reads for hours, stopping only when his room is bright with sunshine, and he hears the little boys beginning to stir.

Cold and stiff, William gets out of bed and goes to take his shower, ignoring Hannibal who is once again sitting at his desk, laughing quietly as he flips through a social studies workbook.

Two months later

Sitting in the car on the way back from the library, William remembers that horrible night and morning. But now, today, everything is different.

Today, someone who knows his dad, has promised to unite William with him.

If she's for real and she actually knows my dad. And if she knows my dad, that means she knows Hannibal Lecter.

William is still mulling over his impressions of the mysterious woman from the library when he catches a snippet of Mrs. Merrill's conversation.

"....because this is something the preschool group does every year," the woman is explaining with exasperation.

William looks over at Thomas; the little boy is upset, jealous to be precise.

"But that's not fair! I wanna see the horses too!"

The word "horses" triggers something in William. "What are you talking about?" He asks the little boy who is kicking the back of the passenger seat.

"Stop kicking the seat," Mrs. Merrill warns."We will talk about this when we get home. We're almost there."

"Kurt gets to go see horses and I don't!" Thomas is still yelling but at least he's stopped kicking.

It can't be... William's stomach tightens. " Where?"

"You've been there," Mrs. Merrill says as she pulls into the driveway, " Muskrat Farm."

Thomas unfastens the seatbelt around his booster seat and scrambles out of the car, slamming the door hard in William's face. Beside him, Kurt is whining to be released from his car seat.

"It's something they do every year in support of foster children," Mrs. Merrill says, hurrying to help the boy out.

Following Mrs. Merrill into the house, William knows now is not the time to bring up his issues with Muskrat Farm. But before he leaves, he thinks, he's going to make certain no kid will ever go there again.

Ever.

Next Thursday, one block from the Maryland Public Library

As Bedelia nears to the designated spot, she sees William waiting for her.

Hannibal had assured her that at this precise location, no security cameras were present

And if anyone knows a detail like that...it would be Hannibal.

William hesitates before approaching the unfamiliar car. He peers over as a tinted window rolls down to reveal the same woman from the library wearing a dark wig.

"Are you coming?"

William nods, running over and jumping in.

He is now inside a stranger's car.

Alone.

He has just broken the number one rule every kid from preschool onwards has had drilled into them.

Sorry, mom.

As they pull away from the curb, William looks into the back seat relaxing a fraction when he sees it's empty.

He turns to study the petite woman driving. Fleetingly, she returns his gaze.

"Hello, William," she says smiling.

When Bedelia approached the meeting place and saw William waiting there, her heart sank. He looked so young, barely old enough to be out in the city on his own, that she nearly drove past him.

So, why don't you?

Bedelia pulls up to the curb and lowers the window.

The boy's build is slight enough that, a lamp post nearly obscures him. But soon, he's spotted her; troubled blue eyes clearing with recognition.

Hannibal is a monster. "Are you coming?"

The boy nods, his hand already gripping the handle and pulling open the door. Bedelia clutches the steering wheel and checks the mirrors; all clear. Even before he William has secured his seatbelt, the car is pulling away.

"Hello, William," she says, smiling wryly at his innocent foolhardiness.

"I'm not supposed to be in the front seat," the child says, studying her face.

"Oh...I didn't know."

Bedelia wonders if she should risk pulling over so he can switch seats, but immediately ruling against it.

"At the next stop light, climb into the back as quickly as you can. "But, first, give me your cell phone and tell me the password."

William pulls out his phone and places it into the cup holder next to her thinking as he does about Freddie's article about Muskrat Farm's dealings with local foster children; he wonders how long before the Verger lawyers will force her to take it down.

"' Will,'" he says, naming his password, then unbuckles and launches himself over the center divider and into the back when the stop at a red light.

Bedelia enters the code and disables the phone, all the time laughing at his physicality. "I can see you've had some practice with that," she says warmly, and for a split second, William imagines this woman is a friend, not a stranger who potentially could be his murderer.

"Where are we going?"

The woman's smile freezes into a grimace. "Right now, we're going to a house in another state." She studies him in the rearview mirror.

"Is my dad there?" William blurts out, daring to hope he would be seeing his father today.

"No," she says, as they enter the expressway," he's not there. I'll explain everything when we get there, alright William?"

She doubts he will be amenable to this, but surprisingly, he says nothing, simply leaning back and resting his head onto the headrest. She studies him in the mirror then looks straight ahead.

"I'm so sorry," she whispers.

"What?" William asks, uncertain whether the mystery woman has lied to him, and if not, why she is suffering from overwhelming guilt.

His nerves cinch up a notch.

"Nothing," Bedelia says, looking at the freeway signs for her next exit. "Nothing at all."

They continue down the highway in silence, trailed discreetly by a small, dark car which has been following them ever since they pulled away from the curb.

William can't see the other car without drawing attention to himself, but he's hoping it's there nonetheless.

After all, it's driver is his insurance plan; should this beautiful stranger intend him harm, he will still have an ally close by.

As for what will happen if the mysterious woman proves to be legitimate, well, William doesn't have a contingency for that scenerio yet. He hopes the person following behind, has a plan which won't jeopardize his own goal of reuniting with his father.

But for now, all William can do is wait. Wait and hope that the speeding car he is in, is actually bringing him closer to his father.

Chapter End Notes

POLL:
Any guesses who is following Bedelia's car?

Road Trip

Chapter Summary

Bedelia and William discuss Hannibal Lecter and his relationship with Will Graham.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

William is silent for all of five minutes until he can't hold himself back any longer. "Who are you?" He blurts out.

"My name is Bedelia Du Maurier," she says, smiling at him via the mirror.

William can see that the woman is beautiful, even with the poorly fitting wig, and that when their eyes meet, her cornflower blue eyes radiate kindness.

"How do you know my dad?"

Bedelia debates upon how much to divulge. "I met him through Dr. Lecter."

"You're Hannibal's friend?"

"You might say that."

"Are you his girlfriend?" William is impatient to unravel this knot of grown-up relationships.

"No," she says sounding amused, "I'm not."

"So you're just his friend?"

"Yes, I think we are friends."

William grinds his teeth, he hates when adults hide things from him. "Well I think you *are* his girlfriend! And you do whatever he wants because you're afraid of him."

Shots have been fired, but Bedelia strives to remain placid, reminding herself that William is a troubled kid who most likely shares his father's empathy disorder. "That is not quite true William," she says, a cool smile gracing her mouth, yet he *feels* he's touched a nerve, "so pay attention to what I am going to tell you."

William's eyebrows shoot-up at the change in her tone; now he's getting somewhere.

"Hannibal Lecter is the most dangerous person, I, you, and especially, your father will ever meet. Do you know why?"

"Because he's crazy?" The boy hazards a guess.

"You could say that...but he's very good at hiding how 'crazy' he is from the world. He is a brilliant, sadistic, man," Bedelia elaborates. "Do you know what sadistic, means? "

"It means hurting for fun."

"That's a good way to think about it. Dr. Lecter kills and hurts people because it feels good to him, but we don't understand why he hurts some people and not others. I do know that he loves your father."

"He doesn't love my dad, he almost killed ... wait, what do you mean loves him... like, he's gay?"

"Does that bother you William? The idea that your father might love another man?" She smiles as William's boyish face struggles to come to terms with this glimpse into his father's private life.

"I don't care if my dad is gay or bi." The boy's round, childish face attempts to appear worldly."'But I don't want him to be gay with Hannibal...Why are *you* friends with Hannibal?"

"It's complicated, William, " Bedelia says with a sigh, " If I could, I would ask your father the same question."

"They aren't friends!" William is belligerently confident. "Hannibal knocked him out and put him in his car. My dad didn't choose to go with him."

A true believer Bedelia thinks with pity. "I believe you William. But Dr. Lecter is very good at manipulating people's behavior. By now, your dad probably thinks leaving with Dr. Lecter was his own idea."

William chews on his thumbnail. "Does Hannibal know you are bringing me to my dad?"

"He was the one who asked me to come fetch you."

"So...he *does* get you to do whatever he wants," William says triumphantly, and his happiness at this little victory tugs at Bedelia's conscience.

"Why did you get into a car with a complete stranger, William?" She asks, ever the therapist.

"If I was your son, would you be taking me to Hannibal?" He prevaricates.

"No... I wouldn't."

William chews his thumbnail as he looks out the window. "What happens if I change my mind and want to go back?"

"Then I would take you home."

"Hannibal wouldn't care?"

"Dr. Lecter wouldn't be pleased, but I don't think he would be overly upset either. As I said, the only person he loves, in his own way, is your father."

"Where are they?"

"I don't know exactly, Dr. Lecter is a very cautious man."

"Did you know that he killed my mom?" William says, testing her.

Bedelia frowns, "I'm sorry for your loss, William, I truly am, but that wasn't my understanding."

"Did you know he wrote two whole, long letters to me?"

"No, I hadn't heard that," Bedelia says, wondering why this odd boy is lying to her, "what did he write to you about?"

"Just a bunch of different things, the FBI took them away from me, so I can't remember anymore," he lies; every line is still firmly etched in his mind. William feels a momentary wave of sadness for his situation; he now suspects that this strange women is the means by which he will have to prove his loyalty to Hannibal Lecter. *Maybe I'm here for her to prove her loyalty to him too!*

His stomach feels like it's swallowed fire.

"Have you ever killed anyone?"

"Why are you asking me that, William?"

A painful memory flashes across William's mind before her guard is raised again.

"You're friends with Hannibal, and he kills people, I bet you have too. My dad killed and ate a guy because of him."

"You shouldn't believe everything you hear."

"Who was he?"

"Whom?" she says, wishing, now that she had followed Hannibal's advice and plied the boy with drugged apple juice. A tension headache is threatening behind her eyes; she pulls on some sunglasses.

"The man you killed. Why, was there more than one?"

William can't believe this delicate looking woman is a killer.

"Did you dad tell you that?"

"No, who was he?"

"A patient," Bedelia relents.

"You're a doctor?"

"I'm a psychiatrist."

"Ohhhh," William says as though everything makes sense to him now.

"If you killed that man because you wanted to, just admit it."

Out of the mouth of babes. Perhaps this child is more unstable than even Hannibal could have predicted. "Have you ever had thoughts of killing or hurting anyone, William?"

William looks astonished.

"Of course I have!" He says hotly, "I shot Hannibal didn't I?"

"Did you?" Tattlecrime is notorious for its unreliability.

The boy scowls but says nothing.

"Is that because you were trying to protect your father?"

"No, he wasn't there. I shot him because he killed my friend John then laughed at me and called my mom a liar!" William's eyes are dark and hooded.

For a moment, just a fleeting moment, Bedelia wonders if this boy could actually be manipulated and coerced into ending Hannibal Lecter's life.

"William," she says sternly, "if you are coming with me, I suggest you get out of the habit of calling Dr. Lecter by his first name. He would find it terribly rude and disrespectful, especially coming from a child!" She removes her sunglasses and holds his gaze in the mirror for emphasis; she slips them on again. "Have you changed your mind? It's not too late."

"I'm coming with you to see my dad and "Hannibal the Cannibal," the boy replies still angry from their conversation.

Bedelia frowns at the crude moniker but doesn't correct him.

" If he eats me, I hope he chokes on me and dies!" William adds with childish maliciousness.

"I don't think it will come to that," Bedelia says, smiling in spite of herself, "Dr. Lecter is not interested in murdering and eating you! Now...I'm serious. Be quiet. I need to concentrate on my driving."

William presses his lips together and stares out the window. Glancing at him periodically, Bedelia can see his mind is going a mile a minute, no doubt busy digesting every detail and nuance of their conversation.

---------- Behind them, Freddie Lounds spins the dial on her police scanner, completely unaware of what she is heading into.

Chapter End Notes

I love it when characters don't know the whole picture or have false understandings-just like in real life.

Any predictions?
Suggestions?

Some one is going to die, but whom and by whose hand is still up in the air.

Consequences

Chapter Summary

William unknowingly cockblocks Hannibal and Will's sexy times.

Bedelia had just crossed the Virginia state line when she finally notices the car trailing them.

She looks into the back seat; William, tired out from a week of anxious waiting is asleep.

She glances back in the rearview mirror, a frown, creasing her brow.

She activates the car's phone. "Call H."

"Bedelia," the well known voice purrs," to what do I owe the pleasure? Everything going as planned?"

"I'm being followed."

A beat of silence, then, "Where are you?"

"Twenty miles away from the house."

"And the boy?"

"Asleep in the back."

"Drugged?"

"No."

"Wake him up and ask him if he knows who it is. I will wait on the line, but I won't speak unless necessary."

Bedelia's anxious eyes dart back to the mirror; the car is still there. "William," she says her voice tight with fear.

The boy stirs and looks up, rubbing his eyes, "Are we there?"

"No. Someone is following us."

She watches comprehension widen his blue eyes. "Do you know who is it?"

William pushes himself up as far as his seatbelt will allow him and cranes his neck. The traffic is fairly sparse so he sees Freddie's car immediately. *Shit!*

William flops back down and looks at the side of Bedelia's face; that's when he sees the phone is on and "H" is on the line. "Who's on the phone?" Little tendrils of fear have begun encircling his stomach.

"That's not important," Bedelia says, harshly, and the tendrils turn into chocking vines, "Who is it?"

"Freddie Lounds," William says in a small voice.

"William," the voice from the car speaker is instantly recognizable; William has heard it in his mind for months now.

The vines wrapping around his midsection turn to ice and squeeze his breath away.

"Are you paying attention?"

"Yes, " William whispers. He's shocked at how terrifying a disembodied voice can be.

"Good boy," Hannibal says, and wonderingly, William feels a stab of relief to have done something to please Hannibal. "Tell me exactly what you said to her and when."

"Yesterday I told her my foster family was going on vacation but that I needed to tell her something important..." William stops because he had told Freddie Lounds a lie about Hannibal Lecter as bait.

"You told her I or your father had spoken to you?" Hannibal is filling in the blanks, "but that you wouldn't divulge it to the FBI? Something for her ears only?"

William is unconsciously rocking in distress. "I told her that my foster parents were picking me up after the library, but that they didn't know she was coming so to just follow us and, kind of just, appear, once we got to our rental..." The boy trails off.

"William," Bedelia says disapprovingly.

"And did you do this via text message?"

"No, I called from the phone near the library; I didn't want my messages to be traced back..."

"Ms. Lounds is extremely intelligent and manipulative," Hannibal's voice is dripping with contempt, "you have put Dr. Du Maurier, I, and your father in grave danger."

"Bedelia," Hannibal says, cutting off any chance for William to defend himself, "do you have William's deactivated phone?"

"Yes."

"Good. Please give William his phone and have him text Ms. Lounds that his parents have noticed a car following them and are planning on calling the authorities."

Bedelia takes an exit off the freeway, and, sure enough, the other car follows suit; she hands William his phone.

"I warn you William," Hannibal's voice is cold, "if you deviate from what I have told you to do, you will never see your father again. Show Dr. Du Maurier the message before you send it."

Hannibal is standing in the plantation home's salon; Will is already in the shower and Hannibal had planned on joining him there.

William, hands slippery with fear types, " F parents c u- think ur a kidnapper, r freaking out- don't come." He hands the phone to Bedelia who reads it out loud.

"Good enough," Hannibal says, " send it."

Bedelia presses 'send' and puts the phone down next to her, where it almost immediately begins to ring. "It's her. "

"Don't pick it up."

The ringing ends and the 'bing' of a voice message is heard in the quiet car.

"Listen to it," Hannibal orders.

"Will?" Bedelia confirms the code, and William nods, resentful at Hannibal's amused chuckle.

Back at the villa, Will is out of the shower. "Hannibal?"

Hannibal pushes the phone's mute button, "I'll be there momentarily," he calls, glimpsing Will's towel clad figure as it pauses, then passes by towards the bedroom," I am just completing a business call."

"OK," comes the faint reply as the sound of bare feet retreat.

Hannibal thinks about Will, warm and damp from his shower in nothing but a towel; his cock stirs to life as he impatiently un mutes his phone.

Bedelia is playing back the message:

"Hi William! It's Freddie, " the journalist's chirpy tones are instantly recognizable. "Why don't you just let me talk to them? I'm sure once I explain everything to them it will be fine. Tell them I can take you all out for pizza! Call me back. Bye."

The car is silent except for the sound of the tires humming along the road.

Bedelia gets back on the freeway with Freddie following.

"I'm afraid your little plan backfired, William, " Hannibal says calmly, "what are we to do now?"

William licks his dry lips.

William!!!! Lottie's voice echos in his head. *Don't do this*!

I'm sorry, mom.

"**William**?" The man on the line is losing patience.

"Let her come."

"Hannibal," Bedelia says warningly, "No."

"Good boy," Hannibal purrs, ignoring his former therapist." Now, listen to me, both of you..."

Symbiosis

Chapter Summary

Will is still struggling with nightmares, Hannibal convinces him they will lessen if they share a bed.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

First day at Cats Island

"Don't go in there!"

Will is begging.

Abigail's coy smile lights up her eyes.

"Why not?" she demands sassily, already moving past him, "Why can't I go in the kitchen?"

"Because you'll die!"

Will desperately grabs her thin shoulder, but she twists away, laughing.

The dark hallway swallows her up.

Will tries to hurry, thinking maybe, this time, he will stop what he knows has already been set into motion...but no... there it is...a puddle of dark, thick blood has begun seeping out of the kitchen doorway and into the hall.

The crimson wave fans outwards until it is lapping against his shoes; he steps forward, slips and falls.

Blood is everywhere, in his mouth, dripping from his face, bubbling out of his ears.

"Will!?" Hannibal's sonorous voice is calling to him from the kitchen, "We're waiting. We can't leave without you."

"Abigail!" Will screams, or imagines he does, he can hear the panic-tinged words in his head.

"Dad!!!"

Will struggles up and looks behind him.

William is in Hannibal's front doorway, a small, dark outline against the porch light, soaked through with blood; Will barely recognizes him.

Outside, the icy sheets of rain and stream in through the open door.

Confused, Will stares; William doesn't belong in this dream, has never even set foot in Hannibal's house.

"Dad! Please!" William holds out his hand, "Come to me, I can't come in!"

Will turns away from his son to peer down the dark hallway.

Now he sees that a figure, barely discernible in the darkness, is walking towards them.

Hannibal's face, like a glowing skull, appears in the gloom, and with each step he takes, waves of blood part and crash up against the walls, creating a narrow, dry pathway.

"He's coming!" William screams.

Will starts awake, to a world bathed in blood.

"Will?"

Hannibal's concerned face is hovering at his elbow.

The world zooms into focus.

He is lying on a chaise lounge on the terrace of the plantation home. The bloodied scene is nothing more than the luxurious and serene surroundings saturated from the glow of a flaming tropical sunset.

He laughs with embarrassment; but his heart is still racing.

Hey!" He says, rubbing his face.

Just a dream.

"I'm afraid the broth I prepared has gone cold." Hannibal closely observes Will's while indicating a table set with food.

"Oh, well, it's getting too windy to stay out here and drink it anyway." Will smiles gamely. "Shouldn't we go inside?" He jumps up quickly, tired of being an invalid, afraid of remaining that man whom Hannibal has to worry about and grabs Hannibal, pulling him into a kiss.

Hannibal accepts the gesture but doesn't misconstrue its meaning; a desperate grasp for balance.

"There are several rooms to choose from."

Hannibal is showing Will the options of the home's second floor.

"I'd like to have my own space."

Hannibal pivots and contemplates the room before them: small but airy, fine old mahogany furniture, its own balcony.

"Would this suit you?"

He walks into the room and opens the doors which lead out to the little seating area; the heavy linen drapes barely move in the breeze.

"Yes, thanks."

Will runs his hand along the carvings on the footboard; Tyrolean horsemen and dogs coursing down a stag.

"Let's consider this your dressing room then, and settle you in after dinner."

Hannibal watches with amusement as Will opens drawers and armoires with the air of a prospective buyer. "Dressing room?"

"Yes, there is a bathroom next door and the room after that is where I will maintain my wardrode... and where we will sleep."

Will smirks humorlessly." When was this decided?"

"It is a well accepted societal more that couples share a bed. And until your sleep patterns become more peaceful and regulated, I must insist."

"I prefer to sleep alone."

Rude...and ungrateful. Hannibal muses that much work is to be done to improve Will's reactions to unexpected situations and transitions. "You've never shared a bed before?"

"Not consistently."

"Let us consider the merits of doing so ... purely on a trial basis."

Will frowns, still unhappy with the plan.

"Humor me?"

Hannibal tries another tack though he finds Will's desperate attempt for autonomy fascinating, "Purely for the advancement of scientific knowledge of course."

Then a toothy grin, Will has rarely ever seen brightens Hannibal's handsome face; he looks like a mischievous little boy.

"Alright," Will concedes, "on a trial basis. One week."

Hannibal nods, "I'll go and begin dinner preparations." He stops and turns, "Unless you would like to come with me and help?"

"I'm just going to look around for a while."

Hannibal nods his acknowledgment and leaves.

Will listens for the sound of Hannibal's footsteps, but hears none as he passes down the hall.

The man moves like a cat, Will thinks apropos of nothing, still unsettled by the idea of sharing a bed.

If you're not careful, he advices his reflection in the dressing mirror, *you're going to become completely absorbed by him.*

And he with you, it retorts.

His two selves gaze at one another nodding in silent agreement.

Reading in bed, Hannibal surreptitiously observes Will's nighttime routine with enjoyment. Apparently it consists of brushing his teeth and then stripping down naked and climbing into bed.

Hannibal sniffs appreciably at his bed mate's pleasant muskiness.

For his own part, Hannibal had showered then dressed in nothing but loose linen sleep pants which ride low upon his hips.

He marks his place in the book with his finger, "Will the light bother you?"

The room is warm without being sweltering, ceiling fans move the air and the sounds and scents of the ocean waft in through the unlatched, screened windows.

"No, keep it on if you want."

Hannibal considers this, then closes his book and places it onto the bedside table before switching off the light.

The room is plunged into total darkness and Will attempts to supress the images of his recent dream as he pulls up the sheet and presses his head into the pillow.

The two men, each on their respective sides, listen to the intimate and unfamiliar sounds of another person close by in the dark, preparing for slumber.

"What do you think about, before you go to sleep?" Will asks when the rustlings have quieted.

Hannibal turns his head on his pillow so he can see the outline of Will's head. He watches as its curls stir in the fan's breeze, bringing with it, the sour scent of fear. He follows the lines of his lover's profile until he locates the dim outline of its jaw line then reaches over and strokes it.

Will starts a little, when out of the velvet darkness a large, warm hand finds his face and begins to stroke it soothingly; he quickly relaxes into the touch.

"All kinds of things; memories, impressions, similar to the sort you do, I would imagine."

"Heart-stopping vignettes of bloody, mutilated corpses?" Will's biting tone has a catch to it.

"Sometimes."

Hannibal's thumb touches Will's lower lip to feel its trembling.

"So tell me, what is your technique for keeping nightmares at bay?"

Hannibal moves his hand down to cup Will's head as he leans in to kiss the side of Will's mouth where it curls upwards, even when he's not smiling. "I devour them," he growls playfully, pulling Will towards him and settling him onto his chest, just as he did on the plane.

Will rubs his stubbled cheek against the furry chest and snorts. "Cannibalistic puns...now I'm really not going to be able to fall asleep."

In the darkness, Hannibal smiles.

"Let us take turns then," he says his breath warm against Will's head, "I will guard your sleep," he feels Will's smile," then you will guard mine."

The point of Will's chin presses sharply onto Hannibal's left pec when he raises his head to contemplate the offer. "Deal," he says, " but I'll go first."

Will pulls himself up off of Hannibal's chest and settles back into the pillows.

Then with wiry strength, only slightly diminished from his months of hospitalizations and forced bed rest, Will pulls Hannibal up to him and settles the man's head onto his chest.

Hannibal allows himself to be manhandled, the same way in which a father lion allows a cub to play with his switching tail: tolerantly watchful.

Hannibal's runs his fingertips across the scar of his own making and feels the tension spike through Will's whole frame. "Go to sleep," he whispers, enjoying that he can hear the thumps, swooshes, and gurgles of Will's inner workings. He sighs happily as Will's strong, fingers card through his hair and massage his scalp.

Hannibal allows his body to relax.

As he drifts, he imagines being a red corpuscle traveling through the veins, and arteries of Will Graham's circulatory system. He is enveloped in a warm, pulsing eternity of red nothingness.

A lovely image...to float along, one with the thrumming life blood streaming all around.

"Good night," he whispers.

"Good night," comes the reassuring reply.

Chapter End Notes

"grasp for balance" / "we can't leave without you" dialogue borrowed from NBC Hannibal
image of Hannibal in the hallway borrowed from a scene in "The Haunted Mansion"

Red Rain

Chapter Summary

*****Warning**********
This chapter starts out with sweet, domestic fluff then changes abruptly.
A canon character is going to be murdered in this chapter by a child. I have put in a "warning" before and after this rather unsavory scene.
Please skip it if you will be upset by this.
Thanks!!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

just let the red rain splash you
let the rain fall on your skin
I come to you defences down
with the trust of a child
-Peter Gabriel

Merrill's home, Baltimore, Maryland- The day William left with Bedelia

"Hey! This is a nice surprise!" Mrs. Merrill says.

"Yup, I said 'Screw this' and left early today," says Mr. Merrill loosening his tie as he walks into the kitchen where his wife is working on her laptop.

"Oh really?!" Mrs. Merrill smiles skeptically.

"Well, that and everyone was taking off early for that D.C. conference," he confesses bending down to kiss her, "Where are the ..."

Like baby Tasmanian devils, Kurt and Thomas come stampeding out of the family room to pounce on Mr. Merrill.

"Dad!"

"Daddy!"

"We're gonna have hotdogs for dinner!"

"I got a 'plus' on my vocab test today!"

"Can you teach me now to use a yo-yo!?"

"Hey, that's mine, you can't use that!"

"Where's William?" interrupts Mr. Merrill.

Thomas instantly looks put-out.

"I let him go to the library alone to work on his state report, " says Mrs. Merrill.

"I wanted to go!" Thomas complains Thomas.

"I wanted to go!" Kurt echoes looking to see if his brother to appreciates his effort at solidarity.

"Should I go get him?" Asks Mr. Merrill noting the stack of papers next to his wife's laptop which still required coding. "How long has he been there?"

"A couple hours, he texted me when he got there. I said I'd get him no later than 6:30 so we could all eat together."

"I'll text him and see if he's ready now," Mr. Merrill says, attempting to walk as two boys cling to him like baby sloths.

"Must...keep...walking..." he jokes, pretending to struggle as the boys giggle and cling more tightly to his legs.

"Let me send this text, boys, then we'll go wrestle," he promises.

"Tickle monster!" Kurt yells.

"No! 'Boy burritos'!" Thomas counters.

"Yah 'boy burritos'!" Thomas agrees, changing his vote. "Let's get our quilts," he says and both boys run off their room to collect the 'tortillas' needed for their favorite rough housing game.

"Okay!" he calls to them, sending his message to William's phone.

"Oh, by the way, "Mrs. Merrill's says," Thomas still doesn't understand why he's not being allowed visitation."

"Is Tom back in GP yet?"

"I don't know, I left a message but they haven't gotten back yet," sighs Mrs. Merrill.

"What about Jeanne?" Mr. Merrill asks but stops, as soon as he hears the boys hurrying back down the hallway dragging their burdens.

"Let me know what he decides," Mr. Merrill says, indicating his phone which he puts down next to his wife. "Because I am a giant who is STARVING and needs a snack!!

Shrieking, the boys run into the family room and Mr. Merrill winks at his wife before stalking after them and speaking in a sonorous voice:

"HMMM? Human Chipotle? I've never been to this restaurant before! I wonder if it's any good?"

Mrs. Merrill smiles and goes back to her coding. By the time she notices William hasn't replied, fifteen minutes have passed. She tries calling but it goes straight to voice mail.

"Hey, Gary?" She says, walking into where the boy burritos have been assembled, eaten and are now snuggled up to Mr. Merrill listening to The BFG. "William's not answering, so I'm going to have him paged then go get him."

"He needs to remember to turn his phone on after school. Make sure you remind him of that; he's not going to be allowed to go to the library anymore unless we can get a hold of him when we need to."

Mrs. Merrill smiles ruefully nodding, "I know," she agrees, "Call library," she directs her phone.

"Come on boys, " Mr. Merrill says, " Let's go start the salad."

"And tater tots!" reminds Kurt.

"And tater tots, " agrees Mr. Merrill.

Two hours later, Merrill's residence

The policewoman has taken the Merrill's statements and is standing in the doorway on her way out.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrill watch as patrol cars pass by on their second circuit of the neighborhood; it's been dark for two hours now and there's still no word of William's whereabouts.

"I know this doesn't sound helpful, but try not to panic," the officer advises. "If he doesn't turn up in another hour, we will send out the mass-recording I'm going to go make. If nothing turns up after that, we'll deploy the helicopter with the loudspeaker message. Usually that's enough to get their attention. Nine times out ten, this is just carelessness on their part. They've gone to a friend's house and forgotten the time. "

Mrs. Merrill nods but she is visibly shaking, she knows William is not the kind of boy who is careless; her husband wraps his arms around her waist.

"Due to William's history, one of our detectives has contacted the FBI, so look for one of their agents to come by tonight. They will want to question William when he turns up."

"Oh my God!" Mrs. Merrill turns stricken eyes to her husband. " You don't think..."

"I'm just informing you of what's happening next, ma'am... Please try not to worry. Like I said, nine times out of ten, this is resolved within a few hours."

"Thank you officer," Mr. Merrill's says, giving his wife a reassuring squeeze, "we'll let you know if we hear anything."

Hannibal's Lake House, Virginia

Freddie Lounds digs through the stack of now cold pizza boxes atop her passenger seat until she finds the one with just olives and mushrooms. She chews on a slice while consulting the directions William texted her.

After a few passes down the quiet country road, she manages to find the discrete driveway leading to tree lined drive and its gracious lakeside home.

"*Margot is letting us use it cuz she is sry abt mason being a dick*," William had texted her before cell reception got spotty then nonexistent.

Ugg! Stupid, Sprint!

Freddie rehearses her pleasant, yet trustworthy face in the rearview mirror as she pulls up and parks in the gravel roundabout.

The black car is nowhere to be seen but a small figure detaches itself from the porch and comes to meet her; William.

"Hey there, kiddo!"

Freddie steps out with her camera around her neck. " Looks like you've come up in the world since the last time I saw you! A Jag? I didn't know architects did so well."

"They went to go buy groceries. "William looks anxious. " I didn't tell them about you. Did you bring the pizzas?"

"Yup, enough to feed a small army," she quips, grabbing her purse and wondering if she should take out the 22 she'd begun carrying after, "The Murder Husbands" went on the lam.

"They're not going to like it if you bring a gun into the house," says William, uncannily reading her thoughts, "They're really anti-gun here."

"Okay," she says, uncomplainingly and takes the small revolver out to store it in the glove compartment. "There, better?"

William grins back."Yeah, better safe than sorry," he says, avoiding the use of his hands as he takes the pizza boxes off the seat. He bumps the car door closed with his hip. *Don't leave*

fingerprints, he reminds himself as he leads Freddie up the stairs and into the already open door of the house.

William walks Freddie, who is busily snapping photos of the home, through to the kitchen, the same one, unbeknownst to him, his own father made coffee in five weeks ago.

He sets the pizza boxes on the counter.

"You wanna see the lake?"

"Sure! This is a nice spread you have here, how long is she letting you stay?"

"As long as we want. But we'll only be here three days."

William walks out past the living room with its panoramic windows and through the French doors to the flagstone patio. "Anyway, it's too far away for my foster parents to drive to all the time."

"Nice!"

Freddie hopes the book she is writing about Hannibal Lecter means she can afford a place like this someday.

"Look at this little playhouse," William says, leading her down the pathway leading from the patio to the boathouse.

"I think that's a boathouse, sweetie," she corrects him as they pass by a small sailboat resting upside down on sawhorses. "Oh, look. Maybe you can learn to sail," she says as William pushes open the door of the boathouse.

"Eww!" The boy has paused in the doorway. "Margot says it might smell weird in here because of the boat varnish... or whatever."

"That's not varnish" Freddie walks into the small, neat, room which has a large work table and walls lined with fishing poles, oars, and sails.'"That smells like lye."

"Lye?" William is behind her.

Upstairs in the second level, Bedelia is alerted to their visitor when she heard voices in the hallway; the guest room's windows effectively having blocked the sound of Freddie's car. She grabs the syringe and taser and begins her descent only to find the kitchen empty; the open French doors give her a clue as to where the pair have gone to.

Why has William taken her out there? Bedelia frowns and peers out, hoping to catch a glimpse of the visitor.

A woman's scream brings Bedelia's heart to her throat.

----------Murder Scene----------

The hammer catches Freddie's cheekbone as she turns, crushing it instantly and knocking her down.

She lands on her knees thinking something must have fallen from the boathouse rafters when she hears a loud 'pop' as her head is struck again and she crashes to the ground, unconscious.

William stands over her still body and watches as bright gouts of blood stream out of her head.

"Is she still breathing?" Hannibal asks from his place near the sink.

"Yes," says William breathing heavily; afraid he might see her brains if he has to hit her again.

"Then you must hit her again, as hard as you can," Hannibal advises him.

"I can't," says William through chattering teeth, "Can...can...Dr. Du Maurier do it?"

"No, William, you already know it has to be you. Dr. Du Maurier will help later, but this, this you must be brave enough to do by yourself."

William wobbly shuffles over until he is directly over Freddie.

Her eyes pop open and she begins screaming.

William drops the hammer, his own high pitched scream shockingly loud in the enclosed boathouse. Freddie grabs his foot and he jerks it away, backing up against the wall.

Freddie's eyes roll to the back of her head and she begins convulsing.

"William!"

It's William's mother. She is standing by the sink in Hannibal's vacated spot looking heartbroken. "Baby?! What have you done!?"

" Mommy! Mommy!" William sobs.

Bedelia slams open the boathouse door. "My God!"

Freddie Lounds is on the floor convulsing.

William is crying as he stands over Freddie, a bloodied hammer at his feet, staring across the room.

"Oh, my God, no!"

Bedelia kneels down and takes Freddie's curly head, matted with blood onto her lap; the blue eyes roll down and lock onto hers.

For a moment, it looks as though Freddie is going to speak, but then her body gives a tiny spasm and her gaze becomes fixed.

----------Murder Scene Over ----------

Bedelia Du Marnier gazes down at the still body; warm blood is seeping through her clothing and she carefully rests the curly head onto the floor. "This was not the plan!"

Bedelia checks Freddie's pulse; nothing.

You fucking asshole, she curses Hannibal. D*id you engineer this?*

She gets up, pushing past William to search for a flashlight amongst the tool strewn shelving.

"Mom! Don't touch anything!"

Bedelia almost jumps out of her skin when the childish voice, shrill and insistent, breaks the silence.

She turns to stare at him, her hand poised in front of a paint can.

"William?"

"Don't touch anything," William repeats. He has stopped crying and is looking curiously down at Freddie's body. "Is she dead yet?"

"William," Bedelia says, unnerved by this development.

"How can we tell if she's dead?"

Bedelia considers her options and decides to support William's delusional fantasy until he's calmer. "We take her pulse," she says serenely and walks over to him.

"Show me."

Bedelia shows William how to take a pulse at the wrist and then at the neck.

"I don't feel anything," he says.

"Yes, neither do I. You killed her William."

William stands and stares past Bedelia towards the sink. Bedelia twists around, but they are alone. Whatever, or whomever William is listening to is only in his head.

"We have to saw her up and put her in a barrel and dissolve her. Then we can go see dad."

"Is someone telling you this?"

"Hannibal."

"Is he here?"

"Sometimes...not really... I don't know...in my mind I think, but sometimes he's so real." He looks at Bedelia sadly." You're here... you're real." William walks to the shelf and picks through it until he has gathered two saws and looks at them consideringly "Mom! Should we drain her blood and then cut her, or cut her first?"

Bedelia has no intention of permitting William to saw Freddie, or anyone else into pieces.

"William," she says softly, and the boy's glassy eyes swing up to her." Let's go back in the house for some juice and then we'll come back here. Sound good?"

"Juice?" William licks his lips, realizing now how horribly thirsty and weak he feels.

"Yes, or ice water? Whatever you want. Then we'll come back and finish here."

"OK," says William swaying on his feet. Bedelia grabs his arm before he falls and supports him out of the boathouse and into the house.

She settles him on the couch and quickly finds her purse with its vial of rohypnol, pouring a dose into the glass of lemonade she's poured.

William is leaning back against the cushions with his eyes closed when she returns to the living room. She thinks at first he is asleep, but then his eyes open and he sits up, smiling when he sees the frosty glass. "Thanks, mom," he says taking and speedily draining it. "Can I have some more?"

"Of course."

Bedelia retrieves the glass and going back for a refill; unaltered this time.

Just as before, William drinks the whole glass quickly then wipes his mouth with his hand.

"You make good lemonade mom," he says studying her. " Are you really here, or is this a dream?" He sounds wistful; his eyes are already going in and out of focus.

"I'm really here, sweetie," Bedelia says, putting the glass on the coffee table and coming to sit next to him.

William stares at her for a moment before bringing his hand up to softly touch her cheek. " You look different, mommy. Is that cuz you died?"

Bedelia takes his hand in hers and places it back onto the couch. She can see he is nearly asleep.

"Go to sleep William," she orders, and smiling, the boy nods, falling asleep instantly with a smile on his face.

Bedelia pours herself a large glass of vodka, neat, and calls Hannibal.

"Hello Bedelia."

"William killed Freddie Lounds."

"Did he? How?"

"He hit her with a hammer."

"Where?"

"On the head Hannibal, at least two blows to the head."

"Yes, but where did this occur?"

"In the boathouse."

"Were you with them?"

"No, I was upstairs in the bedroom. He didn't follow the plan. And now he's talking about sawing her up and dissolving her body in a barrel."

"That is an extremely effective method of disposing with a body."

"Hannibal."

" Perhaps the best course of action is for you to leave him there then contact the authorities; the child appears to be very unstable."

"I could do that."

" Does he think you are his mother and you are taking him to be reunited with his father?"

Bedelia's grip on her glass loosens and the glass slams into the floor.

"Why would you say that Hannibal?" She whispers.

"Because that is what I have suggested would happen if he was a good boy. He is exceptionally receptive to suggestion, even for a youngster."

Bedelia looks down at the shards of broken glass all around her; standing against the counter as she is, no matter which way she walks, it must be through broken glass.

It's an apt metaphor for her situation.

"I'm not asking you to take risks with your personal safety. Freddie Lounds showing up was an unhappy development. It appears William is willing to do whatever it takes to remain with you and be reunited with his father."

"You told me I would be taking him to you. Is that true?"

" Later, perhaps, but Will believes his son is dead and currently I don't feel the need to disabuse him of that belief."

"Why would you tell Will Graham such a thing? Isn't he your lover now?"

"I admit, it was a spiteful act of pique; one which I have lived to regret."

"Still this obsession with Will Graham, Hannibal. You can't maintain this relationship, though it's clear you have convinced yourself to the contrary."

"Will told me something similar to that once."

"Hannibal."

"It's been lovely chatting with you Bedelia. Please free to contact me whenever you feel the need; but not at this number. You know what to do. Goodbye."

Bedelia stands in the kitchen for a long, long, time, staring down at the shards of glass.

Chapter End Notes

GP- "General Population" inmates who are not in solitary confinement.

My apologies to readers who have read this far and might be upset with how the William character has turned-out. Rest assured, this is the only time he will kill anyone- Hannibal 's intentions for him are not honorable, but his father will save him in the end.

To manufacture a monster

Chapter Summary

Hannibal has a nightmare, Bedelia disposes of Freddie and decides what to do about William.
***** updated tags*****

Chapter Notes

Hey ho!

I haven't abandoned this story, its just been marinating in Hannibal's frig.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Day 2 Cat Island

Hannibal jolts awake knowing that the stranger from his dream is actually in the room and intends to kill him.

Even as he lunges sideways off the bed, his waking brain is identifying the assassin's figure as a floor lamp. He lightly lands on his knees, turns, and instantly climbs back onto the bed.

Only a nightmare.

He lies back down and pulls up the sheet.

Jolted awake by Hannibal's movements, Will holds up a bleary face.

"Wha'?"

"Nothing, just a dream."

Will reaches over and fumbles around the bedclothes until he locates Hannibal's hand and grasps it. Hannibal squeezes Will's hand back in reassurance and soon, Will's hold slackens and his breathing slows.

Wide awake, Hannibal stares up at the ceiling and listens to the "whump, whump, whump" of the fan.

He closes his eyes and enters the room of his Mind Palace which contains the memory of his first kill.

He watches, from behind closed eyes, the decades old recollection; hears the sounds of tearing flesh and shrieks of pain, smells the mixed scents of blood and entrails and fear.

His tongue inadvertently darts out of his mouth to lick his bottom lip as it chases a phantom flavor. It's a pleasant memory and the warmth from its recollection spreads though his body. He envies young William. *Nothing on earth compares to your first* kill.

Hannibal opens his eyes, and tilts his head to observe Will.

Will's breathing has devolved into little whiffling snorts and whinnies. Hannibal smiles as he carefully turns to better observe the slumberer.

The fact that Will is here, willingly in Hannibal's bed, would be considered by many, a minor miracle. Hannibal wonders what Jack Crawford would make of it. But to Hannibal, it is the natural causatum of months of plans, plots, and labor.

My design, Hannibal jokes to himself, employing Will's stale old phrase he once used to categorize Hannibal's masterpieces of blood and bone and flesh.

But that was another life ago, another Will Graham ago.

He lightly runs his fingernails along Will's exposed arm, and watches as goose bumps appear and a shiver runs through the sleeper's body. Then, like a drowsy heat seeking missile Will turns and wriggles his way toward Hannibal, coming to rest up against his chest.

" A'right?"

Will mumbles into Hannibal's chest hair. Hannibal runs his fingers across Will's head before dropping his arm over the other man's back. "S'alright," he confirms, kissing Will's head before burrowing his face into its curls and drifting into sleep.

Hannibal's Lake Home, Virginia

Disposing of Freddie Lounds body proved much easier than Bedelia had feared it would be.

Combining Hannibal's advice, with her own medical knowledge, she strips and drains the body before dismembering it; paying extra attention to the feet, hands and teeth. Donning the thoughtfully provided gasmask, she feeds portions of the firebrand reporter into the bucket of lye and stirs the contents into a thick slurry. It takes her two full days, during which time she keeps William sedated and restrained on the couch, only rousing him to drink and use the toilet. The second morning she is ready for the final step of the process; pouring buckets full of Freddie into the tranquil waters of the lake.

"Sorry fish."

Bedelia pours small batches of the toxic sludge at various locations.

The next morning, the surface of the water is littered with fish carcasses.

Coming in from the boathouse, Bedelia showers, dresses and goes to where William is sleeping. She stands over the boy and considers what she must do next.

By now, Bedelia has had time to research and postulate what Hannibal has in store for William. Her best conjecture, based on the drugs he has left behind, and the literature he has bookmarked for her, is that he means for her to retrain the child's frontostriatal dopamine system.

Hannibal wants me to help train William to be a killer. And I'm certain he plans that I will be one of William's first victims,' she thinks with clinical detachment.

The one thing Bedelia remains fuzzy about is Hannibal's motivation for dragging William and his doomed mother into Will Graham's life in the first place.

Jealousy? Insurance? Curiosity?

Hannibal's sadism is the most probable answer.

He did it because he could. I should just kill William here. It would be the humane thing to do...but I won't. There is still a chance for a happy ending for William.. .maybe even for Will Graham. But it means destroying Hannibal.

Bedelia unties the cloth strips which bind the boy's hands and feet and hides them. She snaps an ampule of ammonia inhalant and holds it under William's nostrils. William's nose twitches and his head jerks away from the fumes. The child opens opens one eye and then another. Bedelia smiles down into their blue depths;

"Good morning William, do you remember who I am?"

Chapter End Notes

I'm not certain if anyone is still reading this after its long hiatus... if you are, could you let me know in the comments? Otherwise I'll concentrate on other stuff.

I'm using my own experiences with sleepwalking to describe Hannibal's dream. When ths happens to me- i.e. waking up ' knowing' there is a killer in my bedroom-it really gets my heart pumping, though course, Hannibal isn't such a chicken.

Sciency stuff came from here: August 7, 2014 | Carey Goldberg
Beyond Good And Evil: New Science Casts Light On Morality In The Brain

Fear and Trembling

Chapter Summary

William and Bedelia eat breakfast and talk about Hannibal. Will explores the beach and attempts to reconstruct what has happened to him.

Chapter Notes

Once again, I apologize for the time cuts this story takes- the William/Bedelia storyline is 2 months behind the Will/Hannibal's storyline.
Timelines will converge when William is reunited with Will.

Unbeta'd - if you hadn't realized it by now :-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I was shaking from a storm in me
Haunted by the spectres that we had to see
Yeah, I wanted to be the melody
Above the noise, above the herd.

U2

Hannibal's Lake House, Virginia

The child struggles to an upright position and peers blearily up at her.

"Where are we?"

He glances around the room, his eyes widening as he takes in the panoramic windows and the lake beyond.

Bedelia sits down at the end of the couch and his gaze is immediately transferred to her. She reminds herself that innocent as this child appears, he is capable of murder. *Then again, so*

am I.

"We are in a home Dr. Hannibal Lecter has provided for us. Now, look at me and tell me, who am I?"

"You're ... wait Freddie...Freddie!?"

William's pumping adrenaline has begun to clear his cobwebs.

"Yes, William, Freddie Lounds is dead. Now... who am I?"

William closes his eyes and scrubs his palms up and down his face; it feels numb and rubbery.

"I don't know, Hannibal's girlfriend? I feel so weird," he whines.

Relieved that William recognizes her again, Bedelia leans forward and firmly pulls the boy's hands away from his face.

"You've been asleep for two days, your blood sugar is low, and you're still woozy from being sedated. Look at me William."

When the boy stares at her, wide-eyed. Bedelia feels a twinge of remorse, but they don't have time for coddling.

"We're going to get you something to eat, and then we will talk. We don't have much time. Do you understand?"

The boy's breathing is rapid and shallow and his pupils are still dilated but he nods.

"Good," she says, taking his cold hand into her own and standing. She tugs William's hand until he rises stiffly to his feet.

"Let's go, William," Bedelia says, grasping the boy by the shirt and pulling his unresisting body along. "Bathroom."

"Did I kill her?"

William's legs feel wobbly as Jello. When looks down, a bloody hand lungea for his ankle; he gives a gurgling squeal and jerks away before it can touch him.

"Bathroom, William."

Bedelia watches William react to what appears to be a frightening hallucination. "It's alright, you're safe with me."

But William is frozen with his eyes squeezed shut eyes in the powder room entrance.

"She's on the floor, if I walk, she'll get me," he whispers.

"I'll protect you, go to the toilet...I won't look," Bedelia says calmly though she's wondering once again whether William will have to be institutionalized for his own protection.

Then what would Hannibal do?

She puts a firm hand on William's shoulders and begins nudging him through the doorway. They slowly walk all the way to the toilet and Bedelia releases him.

William cracks one tentative eye open and Bedelia turns her back and walks towards the door. Minutes crawl past before she hears the lid of the toilet hit the tank as it's raised; then silence.

Bedelia sighs.

"I'll turn the water on, that should help," she suggests turning the tap so the sound of running water fills the silent room wondering yet again why people choose to procreate.

Must have done the trick, she thinks when she finally hears the toilet flush, and the 'thwap' of the lid as its slammed back down. She ventures a peek and sees William washing his hands.

"Thank you for putting the seat down, William." *You were well trained,* she thinks with a sudden stab of pity for the mother who loved this boy.

William edges out of the bathroom scanning the floor as they make their slow progress to the kitchen. "So...where is Freddie?"

"In the lake and you don't need to know anything beyond that."

William nods once, his head drooping.

"I didn't want to do it," he says softly. " Shouldn't we get out of here? The police are going to figure it out."

Bedelia smiles reassuringly, though she's uncertain whether even Hannibal's expertise will save them from detection.

"I don't think so, Dr. Lecter is very good at what he does and he's been helping me."

"Good at killing people," William agrees." When do I get to see my dad?"

Bedelia's rosebud lips quirk into an ironic smile, "Soon I hope! Now, first things first, what would you like to eat?"

William looks around at the shining expanse of the kitchen. "Do you have cereal?"

"I have muesli and oatmeal."

William's look of disgust should have triggered a lecture in manners, but Bedelia reminds herself of her objective and doesn't rebuke him.

"Eggs and toast?"

"Okay, but I can make my own breakfast."

"Alright. Everything you need for that is in the refrigerator."

William pulls open the frig door and skeptically examines a loaf of Hannibal's defrosted Ezekiel Bread before placing it on the counter with two brown eggs.

"Hannibal is very careful what he puts into his body." Bedelia remarks as she assembles her own meal of fruit and yogurt.

"If he was so careful, he wouldn't eat people," William scoffs, melting what looks like half a stick of butter in a huge cast iron skillet. " My science teacher says organs are where all the body's toxins are stored so it's not safe to eat too much of them."

"Speaking of healthy diets, that's too much butter," Bedelia editorializes, perched on a stool at the island.

"Hmmmp," William grunts, and proceeds to fry the eggs and bread in the browned, sweet smelling butter.

Bedelia shakes her head and takes her first sip of coffee, immediately grimacing. *Not nearly as good as Hannibal's- the bastard knows how to make a good cup of coffee.*

William plates his food, grabs a fork, and walks past Bedelia. "What am I supposed to call you again?"

"Bedelia is fine."

William nods curtly then keeps his eyes fixed on the window as he walks across the large room to the couch overlooking the lake, making certain not to look into any dark corners or down spooky hallways.

He stops, puts his plate onto the side table and sits, unwittingly, in the identical spot his father did two months before.

"What if she bobs to the surface?"

William is queasily with the idea; sitting here, he'd have a front row seat if she did.

"She won't, I promise you."

Bedelia walks over to where William is staring out at the placid waters of the lake. The child casts a doubtful look her way but she's happy to see him take his plate in his lap and begin to eat.

She stands looking out at the view and wonders what sort of rapport she should establish with William: motherly, friendly, authoritative?

He's been repeatedly and intentionally traumatized... he'll most likely view anything attempt at friendship as disingenuous and manipulative.

"Are you thinking about me?" William is watching her; buttery crumbs cover his face and front.

"Yes, I am William. Finish your breakfast and then we'll talk."

Cat Islands, The Bahamas (2 months before the previous scene)

Will is the first to wake the next morning.

One down six to go. I'm sure Hannibal thinks I'll change my mind.

"I can shower in the other room if you would like your privacy."

Will turns his head to see Hannibal watching him intently.

When is Hannibal not intense?

"How long have you been awake?" Will asks, arching his back and stretching; his body is still protesting from its treatment over the past few days.

"Not long."

"I'm going to check out the beach," Will says, groaning a little as he gets out of bed. "It should be beautiful this time of day."

"It is," Hannibal agrees, adjusting his morning wood as he gets up.

Will averts his eyes and goes to the armoire for clean underwear before re-dressesing in the clothes from yesterday. He feels Hannibal's eyes hot on his back, and in spite of himself, the hairs on his neck stand-up.

"I'll see you," Will says, walking out the door, every nerve ending singing-out with anticipation should Hannibal stop him.

"I'll be here."

Hannibal confirms as he heads to the shower.

Will hurries down the stairs and out into the veranda. Bladder protesting, he follows the pathway through the garden.

It's early, around five AM, judging from the light, and the wind is just beginning to pick up. He stands for a moment looking out at the seascape.

Then he does something he hasn't done since he was a kid; he finds a nice bush and pisses into it.

He shakes off the remaining drops of urine thinking how freeing it is to be slovenly and alone, away from Hannibal and his strong emotions. Will sniffs the air appreciably and feels oddly happy.

Maybe happy is too strong a word. Content is closer," he thinks but can't deny that a weight has been lifted off him.

Good night's sleep will do that, he thinks as he walks downhill towards the shore.

The garden ends at a low stone wall where Will sits to rest. He draws his knees to his chest and wraps his arms around them. He can tell he's lost weight and muscle tone, and his ass is still throbbing from the sex he had days ago; his lower back isn't feeling so hot either.

Fuck...what the fuck are we doing?

He wonders why Hannibal is allowing him this time apart.

"Sure of himself," Will says aloud, "sure of me," he adds ducking his head in embarrassment though he knows he's completely alone.

Jesus, Graham !

Will gets to his feet and pushes off the wall; he suddenly needs to be moving.

What the fuck do you think is going to happen?

Will's feet are sinking into the soft, white sand forcing him to shorten his strides but it feels good to push through the sand, to struggle against its resistance.

Hannibal wasn't kidding... this place is deserted.

He walks on until he reaches the surf and allows a foamy wave to cover his feet, the water is warm as bath water. He turns and walks back up until he reaches dry sand and sits.

Go through it again...what the hell happened to me.

Will begins at the moment he found Hannibal's note in his barn.

When he reaches the memories of William coming to stay at his home, recalling details becomes harder, the events themselves more complicated to decipher.

Hannibal screwed with me, he concludes.

That time period, roughly the past two-three months, is a jumble of images and impressions.

John came over, brought Lottie's gun lock box, Hannibal said...no, don't go off of what Hannibal said, go off of what you remember.

John came over, we were going to barbeque...William went out...Hannibal came in...Hannibal came in and...what did Hannibal tell me? That I killed John while I was in some sort of fugue state?

Bullshit...Hannibal stuck a knife in John's chest.

Will feels a thrum of pleasure when he is able to recall what actually happened. The memories are coming fast and furious now; Will stares, unseeing, out at the ocean.

John went outside, Hannibal came after me...I was on the ground...he must have tased me.

Will reaches around to feel his back but the taser impact spot is already healed, and no longer tender.

Hannibal killed John.

Will's adrenaline is really pumping now. *And if I didn't kill John...William...William didn't shoot himself...William wouldn't have shot himself.*

But...Hannibal wouldn't have killed William, that goes against...

"Fuck, fuck, fuck!"

Keep going!

I wake-up at the lake house, somewhere on the Eastern seaboard, most likely in Virginia...Hannibal has balls to hide us away right under the nose of the FBI. He...

Impressions of flashing lights, and a voice or voices going in and out, burning thirst and aching muscles. Conversations...or were they dreams?

Will stops himself, wondering how long before Hannibal will come looking for him.

How much of a flight risk does he think I pose?

He looks up at the house which appears deserted.

Will doesn't see Hannibal showered and dressed, watching him from the second floor library.

Keep going.

Will's jaw works.

Conversations...IVs...I can't move... offering to fight him.

Images of his fists slamming into Hannibal's grinning, bloodied face while Will sits atop his prone body.

No...wait...that...happened months ago; another time and place.

Will smacks his forehead with his fist.

The boathouse, a man zipped into a bag. Jesus, was that...

Hannibal pulling the bag off the table, the smell of blood, and varnish, and lye and...a skeleton, bleach-white and perfect.

Something about William's group home. The skeleton worked there.

Fear and desire and Hannibal pushing me into a wall covered with jangling poles and oars and...Hannibal ...rejecting me with more coldness than I could bear.

Will's breath constricts as he remembers how Hannibal had stepped away from him, sealing himself off ; becoming a virtual stranger.

So I offered myself up.

Will forces himself to look this ugly thing in the face.

I chose Hannibal, though he's taken everything I've ever loved away from me, time and time again.

"You're fucked in the head Graham," Jack says dryly,'looking out of place in his suit and tribly.

"Tell me something I don't know, Jack! "

Will's laugh is harsh and brittle.

Margot's child, Beverly, Jack, Abigail, Alana, Georgia, Lottie, William...the list goes on and on. All dead or brought close to death because of my connection to Hannibal: Mason, Randall, Hobbs, Tobias; they deserved their fate.

"Shoot Luke or give up the gun," Will's long dead grandpa was fond of saying.

The sun is beginning to rise above the horizon now, and the wind slams into Will, fresh and salty and cleansing; he burrows his feet into the cold sand.

"You know, eventually, either he's going to kill you, or you him," Jack's smirk is evident in his voice.

"I know, " Will says, taking breath after breath of tangy ocean air and expelling it out again, "that's all part of this deal. No one is innocent. Least of all me...Not anymore."

Will pushes himself up and turns to look at the house bathed in golden light, it still looks deserted, but he feels eyes watching him; sherry-brown, steady, fathomless.

The eye's of his friend...his lover.

He walks back up the beach and through the garden, snapping off sprigs of flowering ginger and hibiscus as he goes.

Unsurprisingly, Hannibal is in the kitchen, back turned, hair still damp from his shower.

Will places the flowers on a countertop, noticing how Hannibal tracks him in his peripheral vision but doesn't turn around.

"You trust me enough to keep your back to me?" He teases, sliding his arms around Hannibal's middle and burying his face in his neck.

Hannibal's body is tense at the initial contact, then he twists around, grabbing Will's wrists as he moves. Only after he stares into Will's startled face for a beat does he quiet, his violence ebbing away.

"You came back," Hannibal says, taking Will's face gently in his hands, and Will's gut is twisted as Hannibal's fear of abandonment floods him.

"You're stuck with me," Will says, thickly, eyes filling with tears.

Hannibal pulls him to him and Will wraps his arms around the broad back.

"Everything will be alright," Hannibal promises.

"From your mouth to God's ear," Will murmurs; it feels wonderful to be held this way.

"We are our own god's now," Hannibal says, stroking Will's hair and smelling the sea on him," and they will bow before us with fear and trembling."

Will shivers and Hannibal rubs his back to warm him.

"Cook with me?" He asks, rubbing and transferring his body heat until Will is warm and pliant in his arms.

"Yes," Will murmers against the shell of Hannibal's ear.

"Hunt with me?" Hannibal asks and holds his breath until he hears Will's answer, whisper quiet.

"Yes," Will breathes

Chapter End Notes

"From your mouth to God's ear"-quote

Nigel Rees, Cassell's Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins (2002), p. 90

"Fear and trembling"-quote

Philippians 2:12 ►
Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

"Shoot Luke or give up the gun"- put up or shut up.

Mini marshmallows

Chapter Summary

William tells Bedelia his story- Bedelia hopes it will all end happily.

Chapter Notes

great day yesterday 6/26/15...much work to be done and I'm fearful of the inevitable backlash - but a powerful step in the right direction - this weekend's Pride in S.F is going to be off the chain :-)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I was chasing down the days of fear
Chasing down a dream before it disappeared
I was aching to be somewhere near,
Your voice was all I heard.- U2

Late December, Hannibal's Lake House, Virginia

"What do you want to talk about?" William demands.

Rather than answering, Bedelia scans the boy's face; it's smeared all over with butter and crumbs.

Wordlessly she goes into the kitchen to fetch a cloth napkin from Hannibal's seemingly endless supply. She returns to where William is sitting and holds it out to him.

William looks blankly at the proffered linen cloth then up into Bedelia's face. Rather than take the napkin, William grabs the front of his t-shirt and rubs his face clean.

Facetiously he holds his face up to Bedelia for inspection.

"Better?" He asks saucily and Bedelia can't help but smile at his nerviness.

"Perhaps we'll begin with a course of basic table manners," she suggests facetiously and takes a seat on a nearby armchair.

William blows a raspberry; a grating sound effect Bedelia has begun to associate with the child.

William slides his plate onto the coffee table and sits-up, ramrod straight.

"Really?" He asks, batting his eyelashes and gracing Bedelia with an expression of goofy incredulity. "I just killed Freddie Lounds; Mason is going to kill my dad...but...no wait...you need to teach me how to use a soup spoon!?"

Bedelia's eyes narrow. She has little experience with children, either clinically or socially, so the level of snotty rebelliousness coming from such a young child is rather a shock.

Clearly I need to get out more often.

She coolly returns the boy's gaze.

"What do you hope will happen once you see your father again?"

Bedelia settles herself more comfortably onto the chair and elegantly crosses her legs.

William becomes serious again. He reflects that he has never encountered such a stiff, icy, woman as Bedelia. He is beginning to wonder if she isn't just as crazy as Hannibal.

She acts just like Hannibal and dresses fancy like him too.

This reflection leads him to his next blurted declaration. "For a murderer, you're really bunched-up!"

William is immediately regretful of his faux pas when Bedelia's mood shifts from bemused amusement to shocked resentment.

William has the grace to drop his head.

"Sorry," he says gruffly and feels a wave of relief when his simple apology appears to temper Bedelia's emotions.

"If this is going to work William, you and I need to figure out a way to get along," Bedelia warns.

"Okay! Okay! I'm sorry!"

"Good." Bedelia wonders if the boy's apology is sincere. "Now, I know this is going to be painful, but I need to know everything that has happened to you over the last few months, even before your mother..." Bedelia trails off.

"Was murdered," William finishes and flashes a defiant look at her.

"Yes," Bedelia says softly, pleased with the boy's reaction. *Anger is good, I can work with that.*

William begins to tell her everything.

He breaks down a few times while recounting the murder of his mother. When he reaches the point of his story when Will is kidnapped, he stops, bleary- eyed. William's narrative has whisked him away; back to a ditch filled with stalks of anise and Queen Anne's lace, helplessly watching Hannibal's car disappear around the bend.

"Do you want to stop for a few minutes," asks Bedelia, hoping for a break herself.

She glances at the monitor sitting innocently on the bookshelf and wonders if Hannibal, wherever he is, is watching the live stream.

"No, I'm not done yet!" The child protests his blue eyes under hooded brows challenge her.

Will Graham in prison.

"I believe you," she says, to the shade of that man; a man unlucky enough to have caught the eye of Hannibal Lecter.

"What?" William asks confused.

"Never mind," Bedelia says lightly and looks longingly in the direction of the kitchen.

"Are you an alcoholic?"

William sounds shocked.

"William!" Bedelia says reprovingly. "That is a very rude thing to say!"

"Only if you don't think you are one."

Bedelia's temper flares.

"Drinking a few glasses of wine does not make a person an alcoholic," she argues and pushes up off the chair and walks into the kitchen.

William can hear the sound of bottles and jars clinking together when Bedelia jerks the refrigerator door open.

Jeez! Got Wine?

William grabs his plate and slides off the couch to follow her. He finds Bedelia standing in front of the island pouring herself a glass of pale, yellow wine. The woman stares challengly down at him, as though daring him to comment on her choice of beverage.

Bedelia is afraid.

This realization is enough to make William freeze. Bedelia turns her back to him and drains her glass. She begins to pour herself another, but something stays her hand. She looks over at William and smiles a small, defeated, smile.

"I do drink too much William," she admits, running a finger along the rim of her empty wineglass.

William winces and drops his eyes.

Bedelia sighs, watching him for a moment before pulling the plate from his hand. He watches her put the dish into the sink then just stand there, occupied with her own thoughts.

"Hannibal wants me to kill you," William whispers, swallowing hard to prevent the reemergence of his breakfast.

Bedelia spins around quickly and William defensively raises his hands.

"I'm not going to do it!" He squeaks in protest.

Bedelia's shoulders slump as she stares at the startled boy. She places her finger to her lips then jerks her head towards the living room.

Wide-eyed, William nods.

Then something about the idiocy their situation triggers a reaction in Bedelia; she throws her head back and begins to laugh.

Now it is William's turn to feel afraid.

Bedelia seems to be falling apart.

"I'm sorry William. I'm just a little on edge."

Bedelia fights for composure. "Let's make some hot chocolate and go back into the living room, alright?"

Still nervous , William ponders the offer before grudgingly accepting it. "Okay."

Bedelia smiles; attempting to appear braver than she feels.

"Bedelia?" William asks quietly and Bedelia feels a flood of pity at how small and defenseless the child looks, standing in the gleaming expanse of Hannibal's kitchen.

"Yes?" she says gently.

"Why did Hannibal have my mom killed?" William asks, head bowed, refusing to meet her eyes.

Compassion stirs in Bedelia; a steady patter of tears are falling from the boy's face onto the tiles below.

"I honestly don't know William," she says truthfully.

William looks up into her face.

"Are you going to kill him when we find him?" He whispers conspiratorily.

Bedelia's face blanches and her heart sinks at the boy's melancholy, yet hopeful expression.

"At this point, I'm not certain," Bedelia whispers. She pulls the refrigerator door open and switches-out the bottle of wine for a container of milk.

When she closes the door William is right at her elbow.

Bedelia starts and nearly drops the milk. "Oh! You startled me!"

"Sorry," William says, drying his tear-streaked face with one hand as he pulls the milk jug from her with the other.

He was the man of the household. Bedelia's chest tightens with the thought.

Silently the two search the kitchen for the ingredients they need to make their cocoa.

Once it's done Bedelia pours two mugs then pulls down a bag of marshmallows from a high shelf.

"Mini marshmallows!" William crows happily when he sees the bag and inexplicably Bedelia's eyes sting with tears.

"Yes, I thought you might enjoy them," she says watching the boy's expression of happy contentment as she sprinkles the marshmallows into his cup.

William's smile is warm and carefree as he watches the little white blobs melt and spread in his drink.

Regret tugs at Bedelia's heart, but wild horses couldn't compel her to admit the genesis of this treat; Hannibal calculated theory that cocoa together would trigger filial feelings in the boy.

As Bedelia watches the William's innocent enjoyment ,she muses that this must be what motherhood feels like; an innate, irrational drive to protect and nurture.

Feeling her tender gaze, William looks up.

"Can I have more marshmallows?" He asks, embarrassed.

"Alright," Bedelia agrees because, really, under these circumstances, what is the point of worrying about too much sugar.

She watches as William pours another measure into his drink.

"Let's go back into the living room," she says leading the way, William complacently trailing after her.

An hour, two refills and a bathroom break later, William has told Bedelia his whole story.

Now he is asleep, still clutching his drained mug to his chest; the empty bag of marshmallows crumpled on the floor.

Bedelia walks into the kitchen and pours herself a much deserved refill of her wineglass and stands, contentedly sipping.

After the events of the morning, she welcomes the moment the alcohol hits her bloodstream and she rolls her head and shoulders luxuriously.

She knows she owes Hannibal a phone call but isn't about to ruin a perfectly good buzz by actually doing it.

Instead, she leans against the counter and reviews William's case.

Bedelia is uncertain whether the hallucinations William experiences are simply stress related, or a symptom of a more serious disorder, but it's clear to her that they continue to plague the child.

"*He shares that pathology with his father*," had been Hannibal's observation during their morning conversation.

"*So long as he is able to differentiate visions from reality the majority of the time, you should be fine. Follow the protocol I'm sending you and keep me updated. I expect you will be ready to meet us in less than a month.*"

"Why are you doing this Hannibal?" Bedelia had asked yet again, hoping this time Hannibal would trust her with a straight answer.

"*Every boy needs his father,"* Hannibal had replied, his voice warm with humor, and in her mind's eye, Bedelia could exactly envision his expression of smug satisfaction.

"Well, arguably his mother didn't believe that."

"*Yes. She denied Will fatherhood; probably for the best, wouldn't you agree?"*

"If that is the case then why are you having me bring the boy there?"

There is a longer pause at the other end than Bedelia would have anticipated Hannibal needing to answer to such a simple question.

"*Will is stuck*," Hannibal finally answered. But before Bedelia was able to process what that might mean Hannibal had gone on. "*I have a service, discreet and professional, which will clean the home,"* he'd continued. "*I'd advise you leave within the next twenty four hours."*

"*Alright,"* Bedelia had agreed and heard the ding of her phone as Hannibal's message came through.

"I know you won't betray me Bedelia."

Hannibal's cold tone, a stark contrast to his previous ones,had seeped into her bones.

"Of course," Bedelia had said as lightly as she could. *"It is in all our best interests that things continue just as they are."*

"Yes. It is good that we are of a mind. Goodbye," Hannibal had agreed and hung-up.

Bedelia looks around the beautifully appointed kitchen and contemplatively smiles.

This new location, a small home nearly one hundred miles away, is not fitted with either monitors or recording devices.

So sure of yourself, Hannibal!

She taps her scarlet nails against her wineglass settles on a couch.

Relishing her drink, Bedelia stares out at the serenity of the lake; Freddie's final resting place.

William is mumbling something in his sleep. His cup falls to the ground but merely bounces on the thick rug and rolls away. Bedelia leans down and picks it up, running her finger along the inside rim where a trace of powdered sedative still remains.

"Better for you if can sleep during our trip," Bedelia advises the slumbering boy. She smiles as she studies his unconscious face ;then her thoughts quickly twist her mouth into a grimace.

"When this all over, where will you be?" She wonders smoothing the boy's hair off his forehead.

William stirs and whimpers in his sleep.

"Shhhh," she consoles him and strokes his hair.

Bedelia is pleased when the child stills and sighs heavily.

"Everything will be alright. I promise," Bedelia says hoping, fervently that she was speaking the truth.

Chapter End Notes

Poll time :-)
What do you think? Can Bedelia pull it off?

Claus

Chapter Summary

Porn with a pinch of salt. i.e. 'salty porn'

PLEASE CHECK FOR UPDATED TAGS

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"Gabriele, this is Bartholomew and Lucinda Granada," Hannibal introduces Will to the husband and wife team responsible for the home's gardening and cleaning.

"Nice to meet you. Thank you for all your hard work," Will greets them and smiles at the infant strapped to her mother's back.

The couple smile, nod, exchange brief greetings then separate each to their own dominions.

For many years the plantation's housework was overseen by Lucinda's aunt whose loyalties lay towards the former, not the current, owner.

"His father was a good man," Lucinda's auntie would often tell her young niece. "*But his son? Such a disappointment to that poor old man. And now? He barely comes to visit, not even to blow the cobwebs away. And that 'Claus' of his; he is a demon sent from Hades. You stay away from him Lucy*," her aunt had warned and Lucinda had promised she would.

But then her aunt had fallen and broken a hip and never recovered; succumbing to pneumonia only four months later. When she passed, Lucinda had bravely applied for the job, serendipitously at a time the owner was visiting who had hired her on the spot.

Five years later, newly married, and pregnant with her first child, Lucinda had hoped her husband could repeat her own path to success by replacing the then retiring gardener. Unfortunately however, this time it was Claus who was charged with the hiring so Lucinda was forced to approach him one day after work with her petition.

Lucinda still remembers the heat of Claus' small, beady eyes roaming over her body. When his gaze paused on the curve of her stomach, she had felt ill from revulsion. Still, the job was a good one and paid well so she held her head up and met Claus' eye.

"Got one baking," he'd remarked crudely." *That's good! Women look best with a belly full of baby; proves they're useful for something*," he'd jested in his heavily accented English.

Lucinda had willed a calm expression on her face though her skin was crawling from his words. She explained how Bartholomew could take over the gardening duties, and more, freeing-up Claus 'valuable time.'

Claus had smirked at the flattery, but readily agreed with the arrangement, already planning on skimming a third off his new hire's wages.

But Claus hadn't taken into consideration the rumor mill of the small, close knit community and his thievery was soon common knowledge.

When Bartholew had protested, Claus threatened both husband and wife with dismissal so they reluctantly withdrew their complaint; subdued but still seething.

Claus's rapacious greed made Lucinda despise him all the more.

He's a devil that one. Bad, through and through," she grimaces, gritting her teeth at the memory as she mops the kitchen floor. *I hope these new gentlemen don't trust him with money*.

This leads her to her next train of thought; why young men are the only guests to ever darken the plantation home's door.

No women, just men who lay with men," Lucinda concludes without rancor as she walks into the first bathroom. She looks approvingly at its sparkling appearance. *Neat in their habits;less work for me. I doubt I'll even need the Dettol.*

Finishing quickly, she moves on to the little sitting room, catching a glimpse of the younger of the two guests as he enters the library.

Good looking. The older one too. But no grandbabies for their mamas to rock," she thinks sadly and, as if in response to her thoughts, her own baby whimpers sleepily.

"Shh, shh," she soothes and begins to sweep, humming a lullaby and swaying as she works her way through the rooms.

Hannibal finds Will in the library and closes the door behind him.

"Does it bother you having people here?" He asks, aware that Will has been on edge all morning.

Will looks up from his inspection of an ancient set of "La Grande Encyclopédie."

"I'm not used to having strangers in my home," he admits.

Hannibal goes over and pulls Will backwards against his chest. "I could dismiss them. But it might create talk," he murmurs into Will's hair enjoying the warmth and solidity of Will's back flush against him.

Will tenses as Hannibal's arms wrap around his waist but he forces himself to relax into the embrace.

I *really gotta get used to this.*

It appears that Hannibal's need for close, physical proximity is growing daily.

Will turns and nestles into Hannibal's arms.

"We smell like one another," he smiles, feeling the hard press of Hannibal's cock against his navel.

"Mmmm," Hannibal says wordlessly as he kisses Will's smooth neck.

Will feels a jolt of lust course through him and he grinds his filling penis against Hannibal while clumsily attempting to return his kisses.

"Maybe we should lock the door," he pants.

"This door doesn't lock," Hannibal replies, palming Will through his thin, linen slacks.

Will is achingly hard by the time Hannibal reaches his other hand around and cups a firm globe of his lover's ass.

"When will they be done?" Will moans.

Hannibal laughs and catches an earlobe in a sucking bite.

"Soon," Hannibal says, running his finger up and down Will's crack while he moves his other hand to rub circles over one of Will's nipples. When he feels it harden and peak under this thumb, Hannibal ducks down and laves it wetly with his tongue causing Will to hiss at the sensation. He blushes, ashamed of his responsiveness.

"I'm going to ravage you," Hannibal whispers and goes back to kneading Will's erection. Will bucks into Hannibal's hand, seeking friction.

"Shit, Hannibal!" Will groans. 'You're trying to make me jizz in my pants!"

Hannibal stops his assault. "Language," he growls.

Will pulls away looking irritated and Hannibal laughs.

"I meant, 'Say it in Italian," he teasingly clarifies.

Will smiles and grabs Hannibal's ass with both hands.

"Don't know the words," he purrs huskily.

Hannibal's face goes still, just studying Will, before he grabs the other man's head between his palms and assaults his mouth with rough, wet kisses.

Will does his best to keep up, until he realizes what Hannibal wants and relaxes, giving Hannibal free rein to plunder the depths of his mouth with lips and tongue and teeth.

Oh, Will, I'll need so much more than this," Hannibal thinks as he pulls away to admire his handiwork.

Will looks dazed, like he's been well fucked and can't remember where he is. Hannibal allows Will to catch his breath and adjust himself, while he consults the desk's travelling clock.

"One more hour," Hannibal promises.

"Bastard," Will says through narrowed eyes as he desperately pushes on his straining erection.

"*Stronzo*," Hannibal supplies helpfully and Will laughs.

"Yes, well, maybe you won't get lucky once they leave," he taunts.

Wordlessly, Hannibal goes behind the large desk and pulls open a small drawer. Curious, Will watches as Hannibal pulls item after item out and sorts them in symmetrical rows across the desk.

Will walks over to get a better view then stops, mouth agape when he sees what Hannibal has dug out: two unopened bottle of lube, padded handcuffs, rubber dildos, a vibrator with ridges, a gag ball, and numerous items constructed of leather and steel which even Will's vivid imagination is having trouble determining the use for.

Hannibal is examining his collection with pride when Will comes to stand next to him and tentatively touches a vibrator.

"Would you like me to lock your throbbing cock in a cage while I shove that into your clenching hole?" Hannibal asks dirtily.

Will feels his ears heating-up even as his cock jumps but says nothing; his mind alread racing with the mental image Hannibal has provided.

Taking advantage of Will's distracted condition, Hannibal pushes him face downwards onto the desk, pinning him there; fierce and eager.

"You would like that, wouldn't you Will? Being tied-up. Helpless. Having no choice but to take everything I give you. To feel the burn when I breech and stretch you, fill you up until my cock is all you know."

Hannibal's mouth is close to Will's ear and his words pour out like a torrent.

"Fuck!" Will gasps and drops his head on his forearms when Hannibal pushes his hand along the seam of his tight slacks to find where his entrance is clinching and unclenching. Hannibal's other hand finds Will's cock straining against his pant's zipper and pulls it rhythmically as he speaks.

"I'll fill you so full with my seed that it will leak out of you. I'll watch it drip out of your red, puffy, used hole," Hannibal promises, stroking and rubbing Will's genitals in time to his words.

When Hannibal bites down on the meat of Will's shoulder, Will jerks up against Hannibal and cums. He immediately collapses onto the desk, his face thumping onto the leather ledger as he twists in Hannibal's grasp. Hannibal strokes him through his aftershocks before sitting down on the desk chair and pulling Will on top of him.

Laid across Hannibal's lap, Will rests his head on Hannibal's shoulder.

"I guess that answers your questions," he remarks weakly.

"Oh, I already knew the answer," Hannibal says, rubbing his finger's up and down Will's soaked slacks and Will squirms from oversensitivity. Hannibal takes his fingers, wet with ejaculate and shoves them into Will's lax mouth.

"Wh-"Will sputters as Hannibal runs his fingers over Will's tongue and out across Will's soft lips, smearing cum and saliva as he goes.

"Mmmm..."Hannibal hums, bringing his fingers to his mouth to lick them. Relaxed from his orgasm, Will watches with half-lidded eyes as Hannibal savors his essence. "You taste sweeter than you did in Virginia," Hannibal smiles displaying sharp canines.

In spite of his lust, Will shivers at the illusion to food and Hannibal squeezes him reassuringly. "I want to cook your catch," he says dreamily in Italian as he threads his sticky fingers through Will's.

"My catch?"Will repeats, wondering if he's understood the word correctly. He stirs a little and Hannibal's arms tighten.

"Your bag, your haul," Hannibal clarifies cinching his grip around Will's shoulders. "Before we leave this place, we will hunt together."

Will's eyes dart around the room as his heart begins to race.

"Breathe," Hannibal reminds him but Will still attempts to pull away; Hannibal's arms are steel bands.

"We can't do it here! The locals will know!" Will hisses pushing against the constricting arms."Hannibal, let me go!"

Hannibal marginally loosens his grip. He doesn't want to hurt Will, but he also doesn't want him to run away from his fears.

"We will hunt here..." Hannibal says, kissing Will's neck and jaw and immediately Will goes boneless. "We will harvest the meat here," he continues, looking with adoration at the blue eyes blinking up at him. "And I will feed it to you by hand," he concludes kissing Will's face and trembling eyelids.

"You already have someone mind," Will accuses him.

"You've met him," Hannibal replies, with a mocking smile.

"Claus? Isn't that risky?" Will protests.

"Claus' lifestyle is not a careful one," Hannibal pronounces, stroking the column of Will's neck.

Will closes his eyes and watches Claus' murder play-out, moment by moment.

When he opens his eyes, Hannibal is smiling knowingly down at him.

Will slowly licks his lips, both because they're dry, and because he knows it turns Hannibal on.

"Alright," he says throatily. "I'll do it."

Chapter End Notes

strontso: turd, arsehole or asshole, bitch, sod. It is used as adjective to indicate that somebody is really a bad, cruel, man/woman. It is derived from ancient German strunz (shit) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_profanity

Dettol- Caribbeans usually use this hygiene product for laundry purposes or to disinfect floors, countertops,etc
http://madamenoire.com/304457/caribbean/2/

Piecrust Promise

Chapter Summary

Jack reviews his cases. Bedelia and William prepare to go.

Chapter Notes

Hello out there...if anyone is still reading this, my apologies for the long wait...this is such a heavy story that I take way too many breaks from it. But never fear.I will finish it.

Thanks for reading and if you feel so inclined, I would love to hear from you!!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jack Crawford's home: Five days after William Wyse is declared a missing /abducted minor

"Alright, thanks for the heads-up; keep me in the loop."

Jack ends his call with the FBI liaison charged with William Wyse's case.

William has been missing for five days, and now, according to the field agent on the phone, so has Freddie Lounds.

What the fuck is going on!? What is that woman up to? Does she have something to do with William's disappearance?

This just isn't Jack's month...hell, year.

And the fubar which is Jack's career doesn't end there.

The FBI has no new leads in the Hannibal manhunt, in spite of the hundreds of tips which continue to pour into the FBI's hotline.

Hannibal and Will's trails are cold and turning glacial. Now there's the troubling case of Will son.

Security footage from the library William frequented are stored on a DVR system which is recycled every forty-eight hours; no images of William have ever been retrieved.

Interviews of the librarians failed to unearth any usable information either. None of the workers on duty the day of his disappearance could recall seeing him. Based on information from the foster family and the timestamp of the bus' surveillance footage, William was taken before he reached the library. That gave the kidnapper a six hours lead time before William's absence was discovered.

What happened to you William? Did Freddie take you somewhere? Shit...did Will come back for you? Or Hannibal?

"DAMN!" Jack kicks his wastebasket across the room; it helps a little, but not enough.

Jack berates himself for not taking these possibilities into account earlier.

He doesn't blame the higher-ups for the written reprimands he's received; he's been doing a shit job.

Jack slumps back into his desk chair, rocking it gently back and forth. He's remembering William: how seamlessly he fit-into Jack's household for the short time he was with them; how he adored Bella.

That makes two of us buddy. Sorry you never got the chance to tell her good-bye. That was my bad, Jack apologizes to the memory of the boy who stood here, in his office begging Jack not to send him away.

Would you still be with us if I had listened to you? Let you stay? Shit...listen to yourself Crawford. William is out there somewhere. Get your head in the game!

Jack shakes his head to dispel any fantasies of a happy- ever-after ending with Will Graham's son.

The best he can hope for now is to find him, and bring him home to his foster family.

Then a new thought occurs to him, seeping into his thoughts like toxic sludge.

What if...Hannibal has a certain plan in mind for William and that's why he's gone missing?

A chill runs through Jack as he recalls a conversation he overheard in an FBI interrogation room.

"*What Hannibal does is not coercion...it is persuasion. Has he ever tried to persuade you to kill anybody? He will. And it will be somebody you love. And you will think it's the only choice you have."*

Jack stares at nothing, but he hears his heart beating, strong, and swift, and loud in his ears.

That motherfucker is going to get Will to kill his own son! Jack concludes and the taste of bile is sharp on his tongue.

Three months later: Hannibal's safe house Virginia/North Carolina border

William and Bedelia have been busy at target practice all morning and are now discussing Bedelia's improvement over lunch.

"You're okay...but you still veer to the right too much," William critiques through a mouthful of salad.

"Please don't speak with your mouth full," Bedelia automatically corrects him," remember whose company we are preparing you for."

As she's observed in the past, the mere mention of Hannibal causes William to tense-up.

Having the opportunity to live with the child for weeks now, Bedelia has diagnosed him with a sizable number of disorders: PTSD, visual/auditory hallucinations, anxiety, depression, all in addition to his overlying empathy disorder.

Still, despite the weight he carries on his young shoulders, Bedelia catches glimpses of the smart, thoughtful boy raised by a loving mother. Even the accumulations of current events have yet to completely subvert his upbringing.

"Are you excited about going abroad?" She asks, attempting to lighten his mood.

Their time together is drawing to a close. Already, Hannibal has forwarded her the details of their journey.

"Abroad? Like out of America?"

"Yes. First we go to Europe, then on to the Bahamas and your father."

Any mention of William's father has a Pavlovian response on the boy; it always raises his spirits.

"What's he doing there right now?"

"He's living with Hannibal in a beautiful home right on the beach. You'll love it."

William smiles

"I like the beach. My mom..."

William stops himself.

"It's alright to talk about your mother, William. As a doctor...I recommend you do. She will always be in your life, even though you can't see her. But you can talk to her still."

"Talk to her? Why would I do that!? Besides, I still do see her!"

Bedelia sighs at her lapse; of course William still sees his mother under the guise of one of his hallucinations, though he has never admitted this to her before.

"Is seeing her is a bad thing? Are you frightened when you see her?"

"I don't want to talk about this... may I be excused?"

William is already placing his silverware along the rim of his plate and folding his napkin.

Good boy, Bedelia thinks approvingly of his manners.

"You may, but don't leave the house. We need to go over our scenarios again."

Fear flashes across William's face momentarily, before he purposely lowers it and pushes his chair in.

"Okay," he agrees, his voice carefully modulated, Bedelia can read the boy like a book, "I'll be in my room."

It's nighttime and William is showered, pajamaed, and under the covers.

"Goodnight, William," Bedelia says from the doorway. "Thank you for all your hard work today. You're a very special little boy."

With his hair still damp, and the way he sits curled on the bed, William looks younger, more seven than eleven, and his sad, wistful expression merely accentuates this impression.

"You're only saying that cuz you think I'll kill Hannibal for you."

"William!" Bedelia's heart gives a little skip."Don't say such a thing! I care for you, very much!"

She goes over to perch at the edge of William's bed.

William refuses to look at her. His voice, when he speaks again is a quiet monotone.

"He doesn't want us you know...he only wants my dad. When we get there, he's going to kill us. Kill us ...and cook us...and feed us to my dad."

William begins to cry; fat, silent tears that slip from his eyes and run down his cheeks.

"No! William look at me."

William lifts his head and Bedelia is presented with Will Graham's eyes. She flinches from their pain.

"I promise...I will never let Hannibal or anyone else hurt you."

William takes a deep breath and looks away before looking back at here with an expression of adult scornfulness.

"My mom says that's a 'piecrust promise.'"

Bedelia's eyes involuntarily dart to where William's gaze had been, but of course they are alone. She shakes her head, both at her own whimsy, and because the child's phrase is a new one to her.

William's large eyes mock her.

"A 'piecrust promise': easily made...easily broken."

Chapter End Notes

Remember pie crust promise from Mary Poppins?

Bedelia's dialogue is from S2E12 "Tome-Wan"

Deep and Dark and Dangerous

Chapter Summary

Bedelia and William leave America.
Will and Hannibal discuss Will's son.

Chapter Notes

I'm hoping to finish this in the next month or so. :0)
My problem is now that I enjoy the idea of Will as a dad too much to completely abandon this story line so I may write the next part of the series, or just some one shots, based upon interest.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal's safe house Virginia/North Carolina border

"It's important that you hold still William."

William, blushing furiously attempts not to squirm as Bedelia paints his bare chest with make-up.

He's standing in the master bathroom of Hannibal's safe house, stripped to his underwear, as Bedelia cosmetically darkens his skin.

"How much longer?!" He groans. Standing like this, with a cold sponge moving across his body is torture; not to mention Bedelia is seeing him in nothing but his tighty whities.

"Almost done," Bedelia lies and begins to coat his arms.

"Isn't this kinda racist?" William protests hopefully.

"It could be considered by some as racist, yes," Bedelia agrees as she moves to his back; William's shoulder blades stick-out like wings, and she can see the delineation of his ribs and vertebrae.

Is it normal for children his age to be this thin? Perhaps I should look it up.

William hisses as an especially large drizzle of cold liquid hits his back before being smoothed over.

"This is horrible! And it stinks! Are you going to do this too?"

"Yes, I'll do me next. Then we need to let it set."

"What does that mean?"

"It means you can't dress for a few hours yet."

"I have to walk around in just my underwear for a few hours?" William is horrified.

Bedelia snorts.

"I am a medical doctor, William. I've seen plenty of bare bodies in my time...no, don't move your leg...hold it still."

"Well I don't want you to see me, and I don't want to see you either!"

Bedelia grins at William's prudery.

"Who's bunched up now?" She teases.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," William snarks under his breath. "Are you almost done? When are you going to be done?"

Bedelia sighs and continues her ministrations; if William doesn't like this aspect of his transformation, he's really going to be unhappy about the other aspects of his disguise.

"There, all done...no, wait, let me check so see if you need touch-ups anywhere."

William can't help wriggling as Bedelia clinically appraises her job; dabbing him here and there as needed.

"How long does it last?" William wonders; his body is now a rich shade of brown, as dark or darker than he's ever tanned before.

"Ten to twelve days, depending on how many times you bathe. Alright, you're done, off you go. But don't lean against anything or sit down for at least an hour."

"Fine," William huffs and beats a hasty retreat. From the other side of the house, Bedelia hears the television turn on and the ubiquitous sound of an action sequence playing.

The fact that the home's DVD library was stocked with a child's tastes in mind had given Bedelia pause when she first realized it, now she is simply grateful the boy is entertained.

She strips and begins to apply her own make-up using a sponge and a sprayer.

"William! Could you help me a moment?"

A boy with creamy cocoa- colored skin and brilliant blue eyes appears at the bathroom door, self-consciously holding his hands across his groin. He frowns and pauses in the doorway when he sees Bedelia's clad in nothing but a brassiere and panties.

"You look wonderful," she says truthfully and William scowls with embarrassment.

"What do you want?"

"I need help with my back and the back of my legs. Just pretend this is my swimming suit and we're at the beach."

William makes no move to comply; just stares stonily down at the floor.

"William! I need your help. If I'm searched for any reason, I should have an even application of this."

Finally, William meets her gaze; in the background, guns and explosions are going off.

He slowly holds out his hand and takes the sprayer.

"Good, thank you," Bedelia breathes a sigh of relief. "Let me get into the shower, and I'll show you how it works."

Bedelia instructs a sullen William how to ply the sprayer and he practices a few times before he uses it on her.

We have crossed so many boundaries, a few more won't hurt, she thinks with professional irony.

Then with many stops and starts for directions and corrections, William manages to cover Bedelia's body with the dye, though her lingerie set is completely ruined in the process.

Can't be helped, she thinks, thanking the boy and allowing him to return to his movie.

She examines herself in the floor to ceiling mirror.

Good enough, she concludes and walks out to the kitchen to help herself to a glass of wine.

She passes through the dining room towards the back of the house where William is standing, transfixed before the glowing television. The room's plantation shutters are closed tight against curious neighbors, though the neighborhood is practically deserted for the winter holidays.

That's right; we missed Christmas. And William never mentioned it to me.

A wave of sadness washes through Bedelia at the thought of a child forgetting Christmas.

Maybe he'll get the present of a father for the New Year, she comforts herself.

"William!"

"What?!" He demands irritably, eyes glued to the screen.

Indiana Jones is getting the snot beaten out of him by a giant Nazi and William's fantasizing he's doing the same to Hannibal.

"We need to go over our scenarios again this afternoon."

"Uggggg...do we have to?!"

"You already know the answer to that William."

"Fine. But can I at least finish the movie?"

On the screen, blood splatters across a sandy ground.

Bedelia frowns.

"I'm not certain this movie is entirely appropriate."

"My mom wouldn't let me watch it," William agrees, turning to smile at Bedelia," but here, I get to do everything I was never allowed to do."

A chill runs through Bedelia and she shivers slightly. *This make-up's evaporation is giving me a chill.*

William notices the half- empty wine glass in her hand then looks back at the screen. "Drinking again? "

"Are you cold William? I'm going to go turn-up the heat."

William never responds. Now the screen is showing a swastika, stenciled onto a wooden crate being burned-off by an unseen heat source.

"Wrath of God," William theorizes out loud to no one in particular.

Wrathofgodwrathofgodwrathofgod, Bedelia repeats nonsensically as she goes in search of the thermostat.

That is what we are heading into. All of us... God help me.

"You can't make me wear this!"

William has seen the first outfit Bedelia has assembled for their travels: sparkly pink jeggings, a Katy Perry Prism concert t-shirt, pink socks, and turquoise Converse sneakers.

Rather than answering, Bedelia pulls-out the finishing touch, or death blow to William's burgeoning machismo, depending upon how you look at it; a knit cap with sequins threaded throughout its weave.

"Your hair is a bit short, so we'll just have to have fun with it, unless you prefer barrettes? I have those as well."

William looks like he is about to cry.

"I can't go out like this!"

"Why not? They're just clothes."

"Girl's clothes! With glitter! Besides, no one is going to believe I'm a girl."

Bedelia tilts her head at him appraisingly.

"With those lashes? Sorry William, but you make a very convincing girl."

"I've changed my mind. I don't want to go!" William slumps onto the bed, a woebegone figure.

"Oh really?"

"Can't we just dye my hair blond or something? Or shave it?" He looks up hopefully.

"This is what Hannibal has dictated."

William inhales sharply. "He's making fun of me!"

He certainly is; Hannibal is not above his petty torments.

"No, he's ensuring the best odds for our escape."

William's head shoots up.

"Escape?!"

Bedelia throws the beanie onto the bed and sits beside the boy.

"This is not a game William. You and I are being sought by the FBI. If we are caught..."

"What happens?!"

"I will be arrested and sent to prison, and you will be placed in a facility for children with psychiatric conditions."

William goes rigid.

"NO! I can't go back there!" He yells, jumping to his feet, thin chest heaving.

Bedelia raises her hands.

"It won't come to that William; I promise."

The woman's calm, sincere demeanor works; William catches his breath and sits back down. He casts his eyes along the hated outfit.

"I still think he's making fun of me," he argues sullenly.

Bedelia sighs, half with relief and half with world- weariness.

"No more than he does with any of the rest of us William. Go try on the clothes; I'll be in the other room. Just call me when you're ready."

"Votre fille est très jolie!" The Parisian custom officer smilingly remarks to Bedelia. He winks at William.

"C'est gentil de ta part. Allons-y ma puce!" Bedelia grabs William's hand and walks him away from the agent and towards the baggage claim area.

"Good job," she says quietly into his ear as she straightens his little, purple beanie.

William grabs ahold of it as if to pull it off.

"No, keep it on until we are well away."

Try as she might, Bedelia was never able to convince William that hairclips were a satisfactory substitute for the hated knit hat.

"Let's just get our luggage and get out of here," he grouses pulling at his tight jeggings," my junk is getting crushed."

Bedelia shakes her head. *Males and their genitalia*.

"Oh, there's one of my bags," she instructs and William immediately goes to pull the little cosmetic suitcase from the carousel.

"What a good, helpful girl!" An English woman remarks and Bedelia smiles blithely.

"Yes! She's my good, little helper!"

The woman smiles approvingly then walks over to where her husband is stationed by the conveyer belt.

William returns with the case and sets it at Bedelia's feet.

"Tell me when you see the rest. My eyes are killing me!" William complains blinking rapidly.

"Just be patient," Bedelia adjures him for the tenth time that day. Her own contacts are uncomfortable but nowhere as excruciating as William insists his own are.

"There's one of mine!" Bedelia gives William a little poke as her largest suitcase comes around the conveyer's bend.

William frowns but says nothing as he walks over to grab the handle of the heavy bag.

"Let me get that for you sweetheart!" It's the English woman's husband." That's much too heavy for a little girl!"

The man pulls the bag from the carousel and places it on the ground.

"There you go my love!" He says jollily." And next time, have your mum or dad do it!"

"Thanks," William mutters, glaring at Bedelia who is watching him with obvious enjoyment.

"You're welcome. Now, off you go!"

Dismissed, William returns to Bedelia in an even sourer mood than before.

"Here!" He rolls the suitcase next to her.

"Thank you sweetheart," she coos. "Ah! There's yours now. Pink and white polka dots, wasn't it? Maybe that nice gentleman will help you with it."

Bedelia can't help but poke William through the bars as it were.

He shoots her a dirty look and walks away, purposely avoiding the helpful man.

"How many more?" He whines after adding the bag to the rest.

"Just one more. And then I'll take you to a real Parisian lunch."

"Fine," William grudgingly accepts. "But no way am I going to eat a snail."

That night, in Hannibal's favored pension, it takes William several hours to fall asleep, and even then, he remains restless.

"How is he?" Hannibal inquires.

Bedelia strives to keep the anger she's experiencing from Hannibal's choice of lodgings out of her voice.

"Sleeping, more or less. How is Will?"

"The nightmares are increasing."

Bedelia bleakly recalls the night here in this hotel that Hannibal suffered from nightmares; currently they're staying in the very same room he'd occupied.

"What do you attribute that to?"

"His insistence we sleep apart; I can hear him at night through the wall."

Bedelia is surprised at Hannibal's confession.

"Perhaps...do you?"

"Yes... regularly and quite satisfactorily."

"Good. So it's not an issue of ... performance anxiety?"

"No. It has never been an issue of that."

In the next bed, William's lips move, pleading in his sleep. It's a behavior she's noticed before and it distracts her momentarily from her conversation.

"I'm sorry, what was that?"

"Is something wrong with William?"

"He's not sleeping well; the stress of the situation is catching-up to him."

"Getting what you want; it comes with its own set of complexities."

"Would you say Will has gotten what he wants?"

"In most respects, yes. And when you arrive, he will be getting what he thinks he wants most of all."

"Hannibal...will you promise me something.

"If I am able."

"Don't hurt William."

"I promise," Hannibal sounds offended. "And Bedelia?"

"Yes."

"May I expect the same courtesy?"

"I would never hurt William."

"I wasn't speaking of William."

Bedelia chooses to avoid Hannibal's inference.

"Who will be picking us up?"

"I'll have a car waiting, but at this point, I'm still uncertain of the driver; we've lost our man Claus."

"Lost him? Or repurposed him."

Hannibal laughs.

"You know me too well. Goodbye Bedelia."

Hannibal turns off his phone and removes the SIM card; he'll destroy them both later.

"Will?!"

"Out here."

Hannibal walks through the kitchen and out to the veranda.

"Who were you talking to?" Will looks up from the Italian novel he's been reading.

"Bedelia, she sends her love as always."

"Bedelia's love..." A shadow passes over Will's face.

Hannibal walks over to the lounge chair Will is sitting on and squeezes in behind him.

"Mmm hmmm," he replies, wrapping his arms around Will's abdomen. "Any good?" He pulls the novel from Will's hand.

"So, so," Will says, leaning his head back onto Hannibal's shoulder and closing his eyes.

He's bone weary these days; he suspects mild depression and anxiety are the culprits.

"Throw it away then," Hannibal advises.

"Gladly."

Will laughs without opening his eyes as Hannibal tosses the book to the ground. His laugh turns into a groan as Hannibal begins to knead his muscles above and between his shoulder blades.

"Mmmmm." Will drops his head forward.

"Have you given my suggestion anymore consideration?"

"Nope."

"May I ask why?"

"Well- trodden ground Hannibal."

Hannibal feels tension course through Will's body.

"How can I help?"

"There's nothing for it. It's all too late. You made your choice and I made mine."

Hannibal's hands stop.

"I think perhaps we are speaking at cross purposes. Are you still angry with me about Lottie?"

"Yes."

"And the boy?" Hannibal's hands move up to Will's shoulders.

"The boy..."

Without warning, Will pulls away and pushes off the lounge; anger radiating off him like heat off a stove. He stands facing away from Hannibal.

"He really was just a boy, wasn't he? I was never his dad. Not really."

Hannibal regards Will curiously.

"It's true you were together for a very short time, but I do believe that you were a father to William."

Will laughs hollowly.

"Well, I feed him and gave him a bed and taught him how to fish...but really, he was the one who understood how to be a 'son.' It was Lottie who taught him that...I was just a place holder until..."

"More than that, I think."

Will stares out beyond the green oasis of the garden to the ocean.

"No," he says dully," At the time I thought I was...but now, looking back..."

On silent feet, Hannibal walks over until he is standing beside his lover.

"What Will? What did you learn?"

Will's mouth droops.

"That I was no good for him."

"So perhaps, that is why you dream of him? "

Will turns haunted eyes toward Hannibal.

"Dream of him?"

"Night after night."

"I don't think..."Will whispers. "Do I?"

Hannibal turns to contemplate the ocean spread before them: deep, and, dark, and dangerous, and so indescribably beautiful, it never ceases to astonish him.

"What would you do Will, if you had another chance with William?"

Will follows Hannibal's gaze seaward.

"I'm not sure...I didn't truly have a choice the first time." He turns hard eyes to Hannibal."Did I?"

"I gave you your son, Will. But I wasn't the one who took him from you. Fate or God did that."

"Fate or God," Will repeats numbly.

"Tonight," Hannibal places his hand on Will's shoulder and gently turns him. "Tonight we share a bed. No...you do not have the option to refuse. Doctor's orders."

Will laughs shakily; caught half-way between tears and laughter.

" Jawohl mein führer," he says bitingly.

Will's eyes hold within them the essence of the ocean: deep, and dark and dangerous.

"As a Lithuanian, I take offense at your remark," Hannibal scolds, sliding his arms around Will's waist and holding him tight. "However as your doctor, I will permit it...just ...this ...once."

Chapter End Notes

Just out of curiosity...is anyone interested in a chapter about Claus' murder? I kind of glossed over it here.

I've taken some liberties with the scenes from "Raiders of the Lost Ark"- if you're a fan of the movie, you'll know what I'm talking about.

the title of the chapter is from a book of the same name.

The Claiming

Chapter Summary

Will claims a very willing Hannibal.
William and Bedelia arrive on the island- Hannibal enjoys his games.

Chapter Notes

Hello to any lovely reader who is reading this for the first time, or been following along.

Yes, this is the end so I wanted one more sexy scene between Will and Hannibal and it turned out to be bottom!Hannibal - though we all know he tops from the bottom ;0)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After dinner, as is his habit, Will disappears; Hannibal suspects he's on the beach, so he goes to the upstairs balcony which commands the best view. Hannibal steps outside onto the platform he calls 'his widow's walk' and immediately spots his lover.

Will is shin deep in the surf.

The ocean is placid tonight, spread out like black glass. For a brief moment, Hannibal wonders if Will is contemplating suicide, but dismisses the thought just as quickly.

The moon turns the surf into a glowing, glittering, expanse of bluish-white.

Will stands, a slender, figure, black against the bright foam; solitary and mysterious.

What are you searching for Will?

Hannibal waits until he sees the other man turn and walk towards the house before descending to the first level.

He's pouring himself a glass of water when the French doors open; he turns toward the movement.

"Oh...you're still up? "

Will pauses at the entrance before wiping his bare feet on the veranda's grass mat. When he finally steps inside the kitchen, white sand still clings to his feet like powdered sugar.

"Just going up now."

Hannibal hands him the glass which Will accepts and drinks thirstily.

Hannibal considers his lover; Will is a private man, more solitary than most, protective of his personal space both mentally and physically.

"Thanks."

Will places the empty glass on the counter and stands facing away, out towards the garden he has just come from. His manner is brusque and perfunctory; he's clearly uncomfortable about what's to come.

Hannibal knows how to help."Let's go to bed, beloved."

A sudden tension, a nearly imperceptible rise in Will's shoulders informs Hannibal of Will's reticence. He goes to stand behind him, molding the planes of his body against the smaller man. Hannibal nuzzles his face through Will's hair until he reaches the shell of his ear.

"Just to sleep, if you prefer," he purrs. Will's body immediately loosens...and yes, there it is; the scent of his rising arousal.

Will rubs his cheek against Hannibal's and turns to face him. He feels the large, hard bulge of Hannibal's erection press into him and his own penis pulses to life.

"How do you do that?" He asks bemusedly, brushing his lips against Hannibal's collarbone and up the tanned column of his neck.

Hannibal closes his eyes and tilts his head back, savoring the sensation of warm lips and a moist, darting tongue over the delicate, vulnerable parts of him. The tip of Will's tongue finds his jugular and Hannibal's pulse quickens.

"Do what?"

"Make me want you; every time."

"Fuck me."

Hannibal's command has it's desired effect; Will's grip tightens and he pushes Hannibal up against the island.

"If that's what you want," Will growls, "but first..."

Will grabs a handful of Hannibal's hair and pulls his head backwards; Hannibal smiles fiercely, his eyes watering from the pain.

Will's thumb finds the outline of one of Hannibal's nipples through the light fabric of his shirt and leans down, licking it into hardness. He releases Hannibal's hair and finds the second nub, already rising from arousal. Hannibal groans, then a shock of pure, bright pain, courses through him; Will has bitten one nipple while simultaneously pinching the other.

It's to be a rough claiming then, Hannibal hypothesizes and his heart thrums with wicked jubilation.

He allows himself to be walked backwards into the formal dining room and pushed down upon the shining expanse of its banquet table.

Will uses his lower body to hold Hannibal in place as he stares at him.

For a confused moment, he's seeing not Hannibal, but Randall Tier, bloodied and spread out across the tabletop.

Will blinks and it's Hannibal again, regarding him through half-lidded eyes. Hannibal pushes himself up onto his elbows.

"Don't stop...but I wouldn't mind moving to the bedroom...and using lube."

A sharp, sudden slap slams his head backwards.

"That's for Lottie."

Another slap, brutal in its ferocity knocks Hannibal's head to the other side; his teeth jarringly slide across one another.

"That's for William."

Hannibal's ears ring from the blows; that last one felt more like a punch. He peers up into Will's face through strands of disarrayed hair.

"Fair enough."

Will nods and yanks Hannibal's sleep pants down in one, fluid movement.

"Get up."

Hannibal pushes himself off the table and steps out of his bottoms. His uncut penis, fully hard and engorged with blood, bobs in the air.

William stares down at Hannibal's flushed manhood then looks up into his face.

"Arms up."

Hannibal raises his arms, wincing when his still healing rotator cuff twinges painfully. His shirt is wrenched off and tossed to the ground. Completely naked now, Hannibal looks with clinical interest at his own throbbing nipples; both are red and swollen.

"Follow me."

Will is already moving past him, through the dining room, dark salon and even darker paneled ballroom.

No bed then.

Hannibal sighs audibly.

"On your back."

Hannibal complies, lying down on the exquisite stone marquetry floor. He gazes up at the ceiling's murals, barely visible in the moonlight: cupids and nymphs and satyrs in woodland scenes.

Warm hands brush over his chest before his breath is pushed out of him; Will's naked body is straddling his hips, putting pressure on his diaphragm.

Hannibal's backbone presses painfully into the cold floor as Will settles his full weight atop him. Then Will's face floats into view; the white of his teeth and eyes glowing in the blue, wavering light.

"Don't move or say anything."

Hannibal relaxes, imagining he is one with the stone, the home's foundation, and the sandy soil below.

"Good boy."

Yes.

Will smiles and leans forward; Hannibal forces himself not to met the warm body half- way or rut against it. A hot, wet tongue finds his abused nipples and slowly laves them, swirling around their areoles; pushing, testing, and teasing.

Hannibal's eyes flutter shut and he breathes with slow, measured breaths.

The warm mouth disappears and Will's body shifts off him, then his knees are grasped and pushed up to his chest.

"Hold them up and out, I want to see you."

Hannibal obeys. His penis is achingly hard and the tip is slick with precum, his entrance spasms uncontrollably.

"Yes, just like that."

A pause, then a hot, wet tongue is probing his opening. Hannibal allows a whine to escape.

The probing pauses and Hannibal wonders if he's to be punished for his disobedience.

"Go on...let me hear you."

Yes.

Will's tongue breaches the trembling sphincter and plunges inside.

"Not enough," is the only warning Hannibal has before his hips are hauled up higher and his hole is plundered by a strong, hot tongue.

When Will pushes a thumb in alongside his tongue, Hannibal sighs and groans through the burn.

"You like that?"

Oh, yes, Will.

More stretching and burning as Will opens him, then the sound of spitting, and a hot glob hits his entrance. Another thumb is added, prying his tender flesh open.

Will is creating his own specula.

Not that Hannibal is complaining, though he knows without proper lube, this is going to hurt.

Another gob of spit follows the first into Hannibal's already glistening entrance. A long, eager finger thrusts inside; in and out, in and out.

Hannibal is moving now, rising and falling as he's roughly fingered.

Finally he feels hard, blunt end of Will's cock demanding entrance.

"Relax."

Yes.

If Hannibal imagined Will would take him in inches and degrees, he was dead wrong. His hips are grasped for better purchase and then Will's rock-hard cock is slamming into him, as far as it will go.

Hannibal screams.

The sound echoes off the ceiling and bounces across the room.

The scream barely registers with Will; he's not even certain if it came from him or from the man writhing beneath him, nor does he care.

He buries himself deep within that hot, clinching heat; pushing until he feels the furred softness of Hannibal's balls touch him.

He pulls out, and thrusts in again; spitting once more along his length.

Hannibal grunts and pants, willing himself to accept every thrust and jab even as his own erection wilts into a dejected heap.

Hannibal understands, without rancor, that the man above him is chasing his own pleasure, pulling it from Hannibal's body; finesse will come later.

A few times, by merest happenstance, Will stimulates Hannibal's prostrate and his flaccid cock stirs, but the action is not repeated enough to allow Hannibal true release.

He has much to learn, Hannibal concedes as Wills' whimpers and groans intensify. Then hot spunk spurts deep inside Hannibal's burning passage.

Will ruts until he's trembling and sated before collapsing onto Hannibal's torso; half-hard cock still lodged inside. Hannibal lowers his own, quivering legs and drapes his arms over Will's back. Will rubs his face against the silver fur of Hannibal's chest.

"Fuck."

"Yes, you did..." Hannibal agrees, "Oh...do I have permission to speak?"

Will lifts his head and looks into Hannibal's eyes; even in the glooming the love he sees there is undeniable.

Hannibal's heart contracts; *his* Will is here with him, loves *him*.

"Yes. Permission granted."

Will gently twists Hannibal's springy chest hairs through his fingers. Hannibal half expects more pain but it never comes; Will is gentle in his afterglow. He paints Hannibal's chest with kisses.

"Thank you."

In the darkness, Hannibal smiles, taking stock of the damages: sore tailbone, bruised cheeks, possible chipped tooth, an aching and stinging rectum, which he knows is going to feel worse before it feels better.

Hannibal feels claimed; fucked-out on a cold stone floor with Will Graham's cooling cum dribbling out of his asshole.

Perfection.

"Bed?"

Will laughs and helps him first to a sitting then standing position.

"You alright?"

Hannibal notices that Will hasn't once offered to service his needs; *interesting*.

"Yes, though I draw the line at bringing sand into our bed."

Will threads his arms around Hannibal's waist.

"Fine, let's take a shower first," Will looks up into Hannibal's face," But don't blame me if I kick you in my sleep."

"I never do," Hannibal smiles.

Two week later, private landing strip, Cat Island The Bahamas.

"It's so hot!"

William's dress is sticking to him, and his feet, clad in silver sandals with low kitten heels are sliding around in their own sweat.

"It's the tropics," Bedelia replies, grabbing the boy's hand when a man approaches smiling obsequiously.

"Mrs. Fell? Miss Fell? "The stranger is clothed in the uniform of a hotel, though Bedelia had thought there were none on this side of the island; Hannibal has rented them a small cottage for their own use.

"Yes," Bedelia smiles, and squeezes William's hand one time; code for "keep silent."

" On behalf of the Sheraton Hotel and Resort Welcome to Cat Island!" He beams down at William who squints solemnly up at him.

"Did little miss have a nice trip?" He asks, holding out his hand for William's backpack.

William slides his eyes up to Bedelia who squeezes his hand twice before releasing it; "all clear."

"Yes, thank you," he says, shrugging off the hated pink bag covered in peace signs and dangling stuffed toys.

The man chuckles and takes the proffered knapsack.

"Good! I think you and your mama will love our beautiful island. There is so much to do and enjoy here!"

Bedelia and William follow the man but soon tune-out his gentle monologue. He leads them off the sweltering tarmac and to a waiting golf cart.

"Up you go," he says, helping William in and then offers his hand to Bedelia who smiles charmingly.

"Thank you so much; is our luggage at the car?"

"Yes," the man jumps into the driver's seat and starts the engine. "Everything is in place, just as your brother requested."

He swivels sideways and flashes Bedelia a brilliant smile. "Mr. Fell said you preferred to drive yourself?"

Bedelia's smile is tight but sincere.

"Yes, he's quite right, thank you."

"You're welcome! Now hold on little miss!"

William starts when he realizes that this warning is meant for him. The man smiles and winks. " Off we go!"

They are driven around some low buildings and maintence sheds to where a small sedan is waiting; beyond it is wild, lush countryside.

We could have walked! William scoffs to himself. *I guess rich people expect to get driven everywhere,* he decides resignedly.

The man leaps from the cart, and helps them off, then he places William's backpack into the car's backseat.

Bedelia tips the man, thanking him effusively and he's off, driving away in a cloud of gravel. The woman and boy stand and watch the golf cart until it is disappears around a building.

It is suddenly very quiet and William shivers in his cotton dress; he is reminded of another car driving away and the last time he saw his father.

And now? He looks into Bedelia's face for reassurance and she smiles down at him.

"We made it William! We're finally here!"

William smiles weakly. Though this is all he has been able to think about for the past five months, he is riddled with uncertainties.

From deep in Bedelia's bag, a phone rings.

Hannibal.

William tastes his last snack of airplane pretzels.

Bedelia digs the phone out, fixes William with a bright, fake smile and accepts the call.

"Hannibal."

William can't hear what the man is saying, nor can he garner any clues based on Bedelia's reactions; she is better now at guarding herself against his empathy. Bedelia tilts her head and nods, listening intently.

William shuffles the silver sandals in the dirt, hoping they'll be ruined beyond repair.

Somewhere, hidden by foliage a bird is screeching. He looks up and sees the thin, white line of a jet trail created by a tiny plane; like the tip of the Etch A Sketch he'd loved playing with when he was a little boy.

"He's right here," Bedelia is saying and a phone is thrust at William's face. He grasps it with a clammy hand.

"Hello?"

"Hello."

Hannibal's unmistakable voice.

"Hello, " William repeats and falls silent.

"Are you excited to see your father?"

William's stomach lurches.

"Yes," he whispers.

"Good! Though you should know, he isn't expecting you. It's going to be a lovely surprise."

William frowns and looks at Bedelia who watches him passively.

"He isn't?"

"What's wrong, William? Don't you like surprises? I thought all boy's do!?" Hannibal's taunt recalls a similar statement he'd made months prior.

"That's fine."

William's mouth is a tight line; *don't show fear, don't show fear*, he reminds himself.

"Good!" Hannibal sounds happy, jolly even and the sweat on William's clothes turns to ice.

He begins to shake, sudden, harsh tremors emanating from his core.

"Your father and I will see you after dinner. Now, please give the phone back to Bedelia."

William does as he is told and wraps his arms around his middle; he clinches his teeth together to prevent them from chattering.

Bedelia shoots him a troubled look before turning her undivided attention back to Hannibal.

"Yes...around nine? That's wonderful. I know William would like to bathe and change, maybe even explore a little. Yes, we'll be there. Thank you Hannibal. Goodbye."

"Are you cold?" She asks, turning to the boy."Perhaps you should get in the car." Bedelia turns off the phone and pulls a different one from her purse.

William shakes his head; he doesn't trust his voice right now.

"Alright, suit yourself," Bedelia turns away as she enters a number and waits.

" Jesaja? Ja,ich bin es," she says rapidly; all but the second word is meaningless to William.

In the distance, William hears a motorcycle engine.

He turns towards the direction of the noise. Sure enough, through the jungle, a sound like a demented hornet, is getting louder and louder.

Bedelia puts her phone away.

"Get in the car, William," she orders and a feeling of dread engulfs him; this is all too reminiscent of nightmares he's suffered from.

He bolts into the backseat of the car just before a motorcycle with a helmeted rider hoves into sight.

The bike skids to a stop but the rider doesn't cut the engine or dismount. Bedelia walks over to him.

William peeks over the back of the seat to see what is happening. The man, still helmeted, is handing Bedelia a handgun and a box. They both turn towards the car.

William ducks.

Then rider opens the throttle and the idling engine roars into life; the cycle zooms away.

A shadow falls over the crouching boy. He looks up to see Bedelia standing at his open door; she's furious and Wiliam flinches.

"The idiot only brought one!" She rails, placing her purse, filled now with a Glock and a box of cartidges onto the seat beside William.

"What're we gonna do?"

This was not of of the many scenerios they had anticipated or practiced.

"We're going to do what we've come for..." Her blue eyes are terrifying in their intensity; Wiliam swallows and looks away. "Get your father."

"I'm scared," William confesses through chattering teeth.

"Good," the woman replies and William looks up into her face. "You should be. We are going right into the devil's playground William," she says, reaching in and pulling him off the seat," and I'd like to leave it in the same condition I'm entering it in; alive, and in one piece."

"Ooookay," William chatters. He makes his way to the front passenger seat stumbling because of the heels and crawls inside.

Bedelia gets in and starts the engine.

"Good! Now, let's go turn you back into a boy," she smiles and William nods with relief.

" kay," he agrees, fastening his seatbelt.

It suddenly occurs to him that his life up until this point; Pennsylvania, Georgia, the group home, Bella, Jack, his foster parents, Wolf Trap, no longer seem real.

Real life is here and now, driving in a car to meet a madman and a father he doesn't really know.

Inside William's head a little voice is singing, " *life is but a dream...life is but a dream,* over and over again.

William rests his forehead against the window and watches the scenery fly by.

"Bedelia?"

"Wait a moment, William, just until I find the right route."

Bedelia follows the car's navigation system until they reach a main road, then she looks over at the boy.

"Yes? You had a question?"

"Nevermind."

"William..." Bedelia's tone carries a warning.

"It's just..." William's eyes blur," what if he doesn't want to come back? What if he doesn't want...anything to do with me?"

Tears are coursing down the boy's face.

Bedelia nods grimly.

"Then we take him anyway."

"Could...could I live with you?"

The shy, hesistant request surprises Bedelia; William has never been a fan. She looks sideways at the child.

"Perhaps, but let's not worry about that right now," she says pulling up to a bungalow surrounded by mango and palm trees.

"Shell Cottage," William reads the placard. "This is it?"

"This is it," Bedelia confirms. She looks at her watch; five hours until they are due at Hannibal's. "Let's unpack and then go over..."

"I know, I know...go over our scenerios," William interupts in the easily irritated manner of a tween.

"That's right. Five hours William...and you'll be with your father again...if that is still what you want."

William turns large stricken eyes towards her and nods.

"But I'm still scared," he admits in a wavering voice.

Bedelia turns to look at him and pulls the keys from the ignition.

"Me too William...me too."

Chapter End Notes

I'M GOING TO ASK FOR VOTES AT THIS TIME:

WHO WANTS WILL AND HANNI TO GO OFF INTO THE SUNSET WITH WILLIAM?
WHO WANTS JUST MURDER HUSBANDS?
WHO WANTS BEDELIA ALIVE AT THE END?

CAST YOUR VOTES AND LET ME KNOW- I'VE SET IT UP THAT IT COULD GO MANY DIRECTIONS ...

THANKS FOR YOUR INPUT- I TRUELY APPRECIATE IT...

An Idle Mind Is the Devil’s Playground Philippians 4:8
Jesaja a male's name meaning "God will help"

ja ich bin es- "yes it's me" (according to Google translate so it's probably incorrect ;0)

A Profound and Beautiful Truth

Chapter Summary

Will and William are reunited.

Chapter Notes

Because I'm following a story line which I began long before S3 was broadcast- nothing from S3 has been used in this fic- other than the fact Hannibal appears to be indestructable.

Note: italics are thoughts or memories.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal watches as Will enters the salon, bringing with him the scents of the ocean, flowers, and sweat.

Will carefully wipes his feet, and then locates the glass of spirits already poured and waiting for him.

He chooses a seat near Hannibal, and smiles.

Hannibal scans the beautifu face, tanned by the tropical sun, and in its pleasing form he can read a sad, but resigned wistfulness.

After his nightly walks, the man's troubled spirit appears soothed and he is always content to sit.

During these quiet times, at the end of the day, Hannibal plays for him. Other times they take turns reading aloud, sometimes they sit in silence.

Tonight, Hannibal chooses to play, watching his audience of one; noting when the man closes his eyes, or better yet, keeps them fixed on Hannibal, his beautiful eyes shining incandescently in the soft light.

Hannibal glances at the clock, "It's getting late Will, will you retire now? Unless of course, you would like to bathe first?"

Hannibal is the first to hear the sound of high heels clicking as they walk down the parquet floor of the main foyer.

He cocks his head, like a bird, and waits for the visitor to make an appearance.

Will pushes up from his seat when he sees Bedelia enter the room.

"Hello Hannibal," she says, smiling as he rises to greet her with a kiss on the cheek.

"Hello, Will, " she smiles, looking just as he remembered her the last time he saw her; the time she told him she had murdered her patient.

Will stops himself; that was all in the past.

"Hello Bedelia," he smiles, kissing her in turn," it's nice to see you again."

"You as well," she says, looking searchingly up into Will's face, before turning back to Hannibal.

" I understand that you and Will will be leaving soon for Florence?" She accepts the glass of cognac Will has poured for her.

"Yes," Will answers," we should be gone from here within the week, wouldn't you say?" He raises a brow at Hannibal who nods.

"Then I'm glad I'm in time to bring you this," Bedelia says, stepping away and looking towards the entryway.

"Hi dad."

William.

William is here, walking towards him.

Will falls to his knees and William runs to him.

Will pulls his son to him, clutching him tightly to his chest. He hooks his chin around Williams's neck, buries his face deep into the boy's curls, and begins to weep in harsh, rasping gasps.

William hugs the man, so like, yet not quite like, the man he remembers; the man he had found and lost...and found again.

But then, William reminds himself, *I'm not the same either.*

He hugs, his father fiercely, territorially, then looks beyond Will's heaving shoulders to where Hannibal and Bedelia stand, impassively observing.

Hannibal and William regard one another. A world of meaning is relayed in the look Hannibal gives William; a language which doesn't require words.

Mine, Hannibal reminds William without speech.

Yours, the boy agrees, answering in kind, but there's a spark of defiance there, obscured but not hidden, in his acknowledgment.

William never looks at Bedelia. Her coaching has served them well; he knows better than to place her life in danger with a careless look.

Then, finally, the boy's eyes close and he allows himself the blissful comfort of holding his father.

To feel the warm and comforting heat of Will's strong body, to smell deeply a scent that is uniquely his father's; smelling of the ocean, smelling of sweat, smelling of home.

"William," Will whispers into his son's ear, his world has imploded and he's still shaking from the shock wave, "What have you done!?"

The boy stiffens and Will pulls him away at arms length, scanning his face.

William's skin has been darkened several shades and his face is thinner, but it's the boy's eyes which are the most altered; they stare through Will as though he's not there.

"That is unnecessary; dangerous as well when a child is present."

William doesn't even have to look to know that Bedelia has pulled her gun. He scrambles to his feet, pulling Will's hands as he goes.

"Come on dad! We gotta go now!"

Face still streaked with tears, Will allows himself to be pulled to a standing position. He woodenly turns to see Bedelia aiming a Glock at Hannibal.

Will pulls his hands free.

"Please... dad!"

Amused, Hannibal watches as William attempts to wrangle Will out of the room.

"Stop."

Will's simple command has a dramatic effect; William drops his father's arm like a hot iron.

"Leave now Bedelia," Hannibal orders.

Hannibal tries and fails to capture Will's eyes; his lover is staring apologetically at his son.

Bedelia smiles; unruffled.

"Your son needs you Will, come back with us."

Still staring into his son's face, Will shakes his head. He places a hand on William's shoulder.

"Go with Bedelia, William."

"Will?" Hannibal feels a thrill of possessiveness jolt through him. "I thought this is what you wanted... a family."

Will turns to face the other man. "Not like this Hannibal!" He hisses.

William feels lightheaded; he gropes for his father's arm as the sides of his vision turn black. "Dad?" He wavers.

Hannibal fixes Bedelia with a stern look as he takes several steps backwards. "Leave," he orders.

Will grabs William and pushes him towards the woman. "GO! There's no place for you here!"

Bedelia removes the safety.

Dizzy and caught off balance, William falls to his knees.

His ears are ringing and the air feels heavy, like he's breathing-in water, or concrete.

IhateyoIhateyouIhateyouIhateyoU, the voice in his head screams like a banshee but his throat merely gurgles; he wonders if it's possible to chock to death on thoughts.

"Bedelia! Take care of the child, he needs assistance."

Bedelia shoots.

POP POP POP

Huddled on his hands and knees, William is vaguely aware when a body falls onto his back. He squeals as strong arms wrap around him, pinioning him to the ground.

The gun, loud as canon fire in the enclosed space, blasts away.

POP POP POP POP

Wood slivers, shards of glass, hot shell cases, and chunks of marble rain down upon the boy; the metallic smell of gunpowder fills his nose and mouth.

When the shots finally cease, Will raises his head up from where he's enveloped William's body with his own.

Bedelia and Hannibal are both gone.

Will struggles to his feet, and peers around the dim room before finally picking-out a slumped figure.

Hannibal.

Slipping on debris in his haste, Will stumbles to where Hannibal is propped up against a bullet-shattered marble top commode. Hannibal is examining his abdomen with interest.

Their eyes meet, then Hannibal pulls his hands away; a gush of bright blood wells up.

"NO!"

Will's scream carries outside to the veranda where Bedelia sits, waiting. She consults her watch; fifteen to twenty minutes until Hannibal bleeds-out.

The woman hopes that in the interim, Will won't do anything stupid; she sighs, anything is possible at this point.

She reloads her gun and returns to the quiet house.

William remains right where she'd left him; curled-up like a little pill bug, covered by bits of broken glass and marble.

Bedelia scans the room cautiously; other than the whimpering child, it appears deserted.

The sound of grinding gears and an engine roaring to life causes Bedelia to spin towards the front door.

Heart pounding, she flings open one side of it, just in time to watch the taillights of her rental car recede down the gravel driveway.

She stands, panting, watching it disappear into the night.

"Put the gun down, or I will shoot it out of your hand."

Oh, Will...what has he done to you?

Shaking, Bedelia slowly bends to place the Glock against the mansion's balustrade. "Are you going to hurt me Will?"

"Good...now put your hands on top of your head and slowly stand-up."

Bedelia does as she is told and turns to see Will Graham pointing a rifle at her.

"Don't do this, Will. He's gone now. Come with us. William ..."

"Shut up."

"Dad!?"

"Stay in the house William! Everything is fine!"

"Hannibal's gone! Where's Bedelia?"

William's voice is coming nearer.

" STAY INSIDE WILLIAM!!"

"Please..."Bedelia's tears glitter in the moonlight," please don't do this to your son."

"Me?! I haven't done anything..."

"What Hannibal has done then...What Hannibal will continue to do unless someone stops him."

Will stares at her; her heart drops even further at his expression.

"You did this to yourself Bedelia...your own nature did this... Hannibal was merely an accelerant."

"Will..."

Will gestures for her to walk.

"Get in front of me and walk. If you say one word to either myself or William, I will shoot you through the liver."

Bedelia feels a wave of nausea; Will Graham is gone, replaced by a monster.

Frankenstein's monster, she thinks giddy with hysteria, as she wobbles through the enormous double doors and into the Grecian foyer, *sewn together with bits and pieces of Hannibal's psyche.*

She pretends not to notice William, leaning against a column when she passes.

"Stay here, William. Bear left Bedelia."

"Dad?"

"**Do as I say young man**!"

Bedelia cringes at his tone.

I'm sorry William. I've let us both down.

"Keep going, second room on the left."

Bedelia enters the library and Will snaps on the light.

"On the ground, face down."

Bedelia complies and is roughly searched before a hank of her hair is seized; her head is cruelly jerked upwards.

"I should kill you for what you've done," Will snarls and slams her head onto the carpeted floor.

Dazed, Bedelia gasps as her wrists are caught up and brought to the small of her back. She hears the chink and snap of handcuffs.

She rests her hot, dizzy head on the Turkish rug as Will hog ties her with Asanawa.

He's plundering Hannibal's private collection,she surmises when a ball gag is forced into her mouth and a fleece blindfold is fitted around her head. *I should have guessed where his predilections lie*.

Will drags Bedelia under the huge Victorian desk and shoves its captains' armchair back into place.

She's suddenly grateful for Hannibal's cleaning regime; thankful not to be breathing-in decades worth of dust bunnies.

"I'll be back."

Bedelia hears the sound and vibration of footstep receding.

Trapped in the dark, feeling her limbs grow numb, the woman attempts to remain calm. She counts to one hundred; first in English, then French, then Italian.

By the time she's reached fifty in German, she falls into a fitful doze.

A cell phone is ringing when Will returns to the foyer, but the sound barely registers; William is no longer where he left him.

"William?!"

Will runs through the open front door.

"William?! It's okay! You can come out!"

He peers down the gravel driveway but doesn't venture further than the steps. He decides that pursuing a boy who may or may not have come this way into overgrown vegetation is lunacy.

He runs back into the house.

"William?"

Will re-enters the salon, broken glass and stone crunching underfoot. He kicks a shell casing and watches it skitter across the floor.

He has just finished searching the first floor when he has a revelation. He tears open the French doors and runs across the terrace and down into the garden.

He reaches the stone wall and jumps onto it, scanning the shore. A waning moon provides more than enough light for him to see the beach and surf clearly.

Nothing.

"William!"

Oh my God... Did I imagine all this? Am I hallucinating?

Will returns to the debris- strewn salon.

"William?"

Will's mouth is dry; first Hannibal and now William.

He runs back into the library and pulls out the desk chair; a diminutive feminine figure, hogtied, gagged, and blindfolded, jerks awake.

Will backs away, not bothering to replace the chair.

He fruitlessly re-searches the first floor before moving onto the second.

He is just about to head-up to the attic when he hears a tentative voice calling from the downstairs hall.

"Hello?! Sir!?"

Will runs down two flights of stairs to find a girl, no more than sixteen, standing in the foyer.

"Yes?"

"My uncle sent me to tell you that your...friend is doing much better."

"Mr. Fell?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Fell. The gentleman who was accidentally shot."

"He's alright? Where is he?"

"He is with my uncle, Mr. Samson, who is a doctor. Your friend has been given some stitches and some medicine but he's still very weak. My uncle thinks he should go to hospital but Mr. Fell won't agree...he is very..."

"Stubborn?"

Will smiles warmly, attempting to put the girl at ease.

She grins in return.

"Yes sir, he called here but when you didn't pick-up he became worried," the girl's eyes dart inquisitively around the mansion's interior.

Will laughs self consciously. "I'm afraid we were drinking a bit too much and...he dared me to some target practice... and well... you know the rest."

"Yes, sir, shooting guns is a very dangerous thing to do! Mr. Fell explained it all to my uncle. I think a policeman will be coming tomorrow just to make a report. "

Will's smile reaches his eyes.

"What's your name?"

"Angelica, sir."

"A pretty name for a pretty girl! Thank you so much Angelica for coming to tell me. Do you live close by?"

"Not too close, sir. About twenty minutes on bike. My cousin Lucinda is the housekeeper here."

" Lucinda! Yes! She's wonderful. And you rode all that way in the dark?"

"I have a light, and the moon is bright; it's no bother."

Will look around helplessly. "I'm sorry, I don't know where my wallet..."

"That's fine, sir," the girl is already walking back through the doorway. "Mr. Fell has been very generous. He should be here shortly; unless my uncle has convinced him to go to the clinic."

Will hopes for the uncle's sake that Hannibal is content with his situation; he shelves his concern about the policeman's visit for now.

"Good night then, and be careful on your return trip!"

"I will sir, thank you!"

As Will watches the girl mount her bike and ride away he wonders about Bedelia's island network; someone local must have supplied her with the gun.

His thoughts return to William.

If he's not on the beach... or in the house...

He returns to the mansion, and heads to the kitchen for a drink. He pours himself a glass of cooking sherry and sips it, hoping the alcohol will help still his mind.

He leans against the counter and closes his eyes.

I don't want to be here, but I'm afraid to leave...I would squeeze under a bed or hide in a closet...but I'm not in either of those places...

Will's eyes pop open and he slams his glass down on the counter.

*WilliamWilliamWilliamWilliam,*the mantra runs through his mind as he opens the front door and sprints down the sweeping front steps and along the gravel path.

I want to leave, but I'm afraid to leave...its dark...

Will reaches the garage where Hannibal's little Nissan is parked; a concession to "blending-in."

Will pulls open the back door and his knees buckle with relief.

Curled up on the back seat clutching an umbrella as an impromptu weapon, is William, fast asleep.

Will carefully pulls the umbrella out of the boy's loose grip and scoops him into his arms.

The boy grunts in his sleep as he is swung out of the car, but quiets as soon as Will settles him more comfortably against his chest.

William's brown curls are dusted with glass and marble dust; he smells like leather and gunpowder and salt.

Will carries his son to the house and through to the salon. He gingerly lies down on a sofa and drapes the sleeping boy over him like a blanket.

Father and son sigh in unison.

When Hannibal returns an hour later, sore and weary, he finds his lover asleep on the couch, his chest pillowing his son's head, both fast asleep.

Hannibal stands over the pair, his eyes glowing in the dark room, watching.

Father and sons' chests rise and fall in synch, and their dark lashes flutter against their checks.

Hannibal runs his hand gently over Will's head and then William's; neither stirs.

Taking his time, Hannibal searches the house until he finds Bedelia. He chuckles appreciably at Will's chosen method for securing her.

"Well Bedelia," he remarks chummily as he sits upon the sugar tycoon's chair, "here you are...at last."

The scent of fresh tears is too tempting; Hannibal reaches down and pulls off the blindfold.

Bedelia gazes up at him blinking rapidly in the dim light.

Hannibal's head tilts; gagged as she is, the woman brings to mind a sow, prepped for roasting, with a juicy apple in her mouth.

"I had every intention of eating you my dear," he says, cocking his head and smiling down at her, "but now...I'm afraid I might not have time to do you justice."

He regards her warmly; Bedelia would have made a delicious Imu Pua'a : gutted and bled, rubbed with sea salt, wrapped in ti and banana leaves, and slowly cooked to perfection.

"Crispy on the outside, tender on the inside," he notes longingly while twirling his cane.

Bedelia noticeably blanches.

"Pity...but maybe we still have time for something less ambitious; more along the lines of an appetizer or *amuse-bouche*?"

Bedelia twists and turns her head as Hannibal begins to replace the blindfold.

"What...you don't agree?"

Hannibal finishes securing the blindfold and Bedelia stops squirming. Her head thumps to the floor, exhausted.

"Well...perhaps you're right. Considering William's background, the child's palate won't extend beyond macaroni and cheese."

Hannibal's enunciation of the dreaded dish is playfully contemptuous.

"He would never have had the opportunity to sample anything half as exotic as you... Dr. Du Maurier."

Hannibal caresses the hair off Bedelia's face before heaving himself upright and pushing the chair back in.

I will consult Will, he decides, as he leaves the study to locate his cupboard of pharmaceuticals. *It's my understanding that one must consult the parent before introducing a child to new foods*.

When William finally wakes, he's flat on his back staring up at a vaulted ceiling where a fan spins wildly.

Confused, he looks around at his surroundings.

He's lying on a four poster bed in a large room fitted with floor to ceiling plantation shutters. The fan whips his hair and face, making his eyes water.

Then his mind is flooded with memories of what has happened and he sits bolt upright.

The room immediately tilts and spins; William closes his eyes and flops back against the pillows.

When the world stops spinning he opens one cautious eye and pushes down the sheet to find he's dressed in a pair of familiar pajamas.

He remembers picking them out on a website when ...Bedelia.

"Bedelia!"

"William?"

Will Graham is walking towards him, carrying a stack of towels.

"Hey! How're you feeling?"

Will places the towels on the foot of William's bed.

The boy's eyes narrow.

"Where's Bedelia?" He croaks.

His throat feels sore and dry. He thinks he could drink a whole bathtub of water he's so thirsty.

"She's fine. How're you?"

"Where's Hannibal?"

"In the next room, resting."

William squeezes his eyes shut, trying to reconstruct the sequence of events; they pop open.

"Bedelia ...she shot him?"

"Yes, but he's...he's going to be alright."

Your dad was not a well man, William. It's not completely his fault. We just underestimated Hannibal's control over him. None of us saw this coming. I'm sorry.

Jack's voice rings mockingly in William's head.

Will blushes at his son's expression of scornful distaste.

Hot, angry blood pulses through William, expelling the fuzziness in his head and limbs.

"Mr. Crawford was right about you! He wasn't the liar! You are!"

"William!"

Hannibal has appeared, leaning on a cane.

"Will? May I speak with William...privately?"

Will gives his son an apologetic glance and nods. The boy's nose wrinkles, like he's smelling something nasty.

Will's neck flushes hot, but Hannibal's steadying hand is warm against his back.

"It's alright, I'll speak with him," Hannibal murmurs into his ear.

When Will hesitates, the pressure on his back increases. He looks up at Hannibal, nods once and leaves.

Hannibal smiles approvingly and turns toward the bed where William sits, staring at him.

"We meet again," the man jokes, settling onto the first handy chair; William's fear-scent is very faint.

Good boy.

"What did you do to him?"

Hannibal ponders the boy's question before finally answering.

"How old are you William?"

William's steely gaze wavers.

"Why!?"

"Because I need to ascertain where you are...developmentally."

William's mouth becomes a thin line.

"Eleven."

"Eleven...that's old enough to understand a profound and beautiful truth."

William's mouth drops open.

"Your father and I ...fell in love."

Hannibal beams at William and raps his cane rapidly on the floor like a circus barker.

William's expression hardens; he doubts he will ever get a straight answer from this nut-job.

"Where's Bedelia?"

"Dr. Du Maurier is around; downstairs I believe."

"Is she dead?"

"Oh, no...Dr. Du Maurier is very much alive."

William chews on his thumbnail; Hannibal stores that little tidbit of information away for later.

He finds he's warming more and more to Will Graham's bastard.

"What are you going to do?"

"Do?"

"With me."

Hannibal smile widens; William hates how the man's sharp canines become exposed whenever he's feeling particularly pleased with himself.

"Well... I'd have to say...that depends entirely upon you young man."

Chapter End Notes

And thus...we come to the end.

If you would like to read more...please drop me a comment...

Thanks for reading and kudoing and commenting!

Asanawa- rope used most commonly for Japanese bondage-Wikipedia

Imu Pua'a (earth-oven pig)- yes this is not from the Bahamas, but Hannibal doesn't mind, he loves fusion cooking.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!